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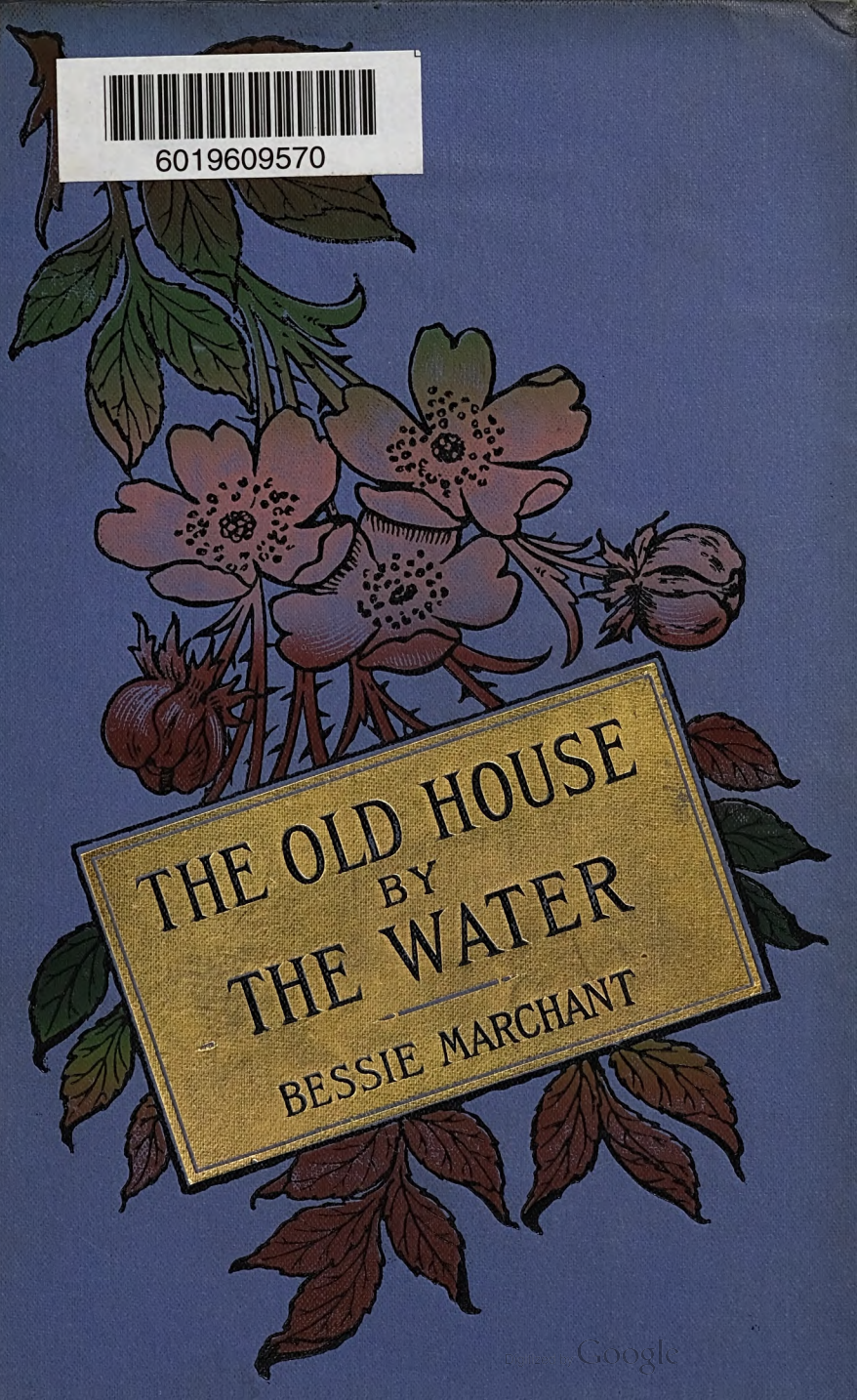

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THE OLD HOUSE

BY

THE WATER

BY

BESSIE MARCHANT

LONDON
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
56 PATERNOSTER ROW AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

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THE OLD HOUSE BY THE WATER

CHAPTER I

PANSY AT HOME

'Father, I own
Thy love alone
Thy little one doth keep.

All through the day
I humbly pray
Be Thou my Guard and Guide.'

PANSY, have you said your prayers?'

'No, mother, I don't want to,' Pansy answered in a rather defiant tone.

'Why not?' inquired Mrs. Vant.

'Because I don't believe that God has time to listen to what a little girl like me says to Him; He has got such a dreadful lot of things to see after,' Pansy said, as she carefully unbuttoned

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Bloom's nightgown, and tucked her treasured waxen baby into the daintily-fitted cradle, which was one of her latest acquisitions.

'Pansy, come here,' her mother said quietly; and the doll being comfortably bestowed for the night, Pansy came to where her mother was resting in an easy-chair by the window.

The window was a French one, and led on to a stone verandah, and thence by steps to a large courtyard, in the centre of which was a fountain. There were queer tropical plants growing in the plot of ground immediately surrounding the fountain, and on the broad edge of the marble basin Pansy's ayah was sitting, enjoying the cooler air of evening.

'Look there, Pansy,' Mrs. Vant said, drawing the little girl's attention to the world outside the window.

'What am I to look at, mother?'

'At that little sparrow, Pansy; do you see him?'

'Oh yes, there he is, almost close to Moolah. What a funny perky little head he has, mother! And see, he has just gobbled a mosquito down his greedy little throat!'

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Who made the sparrow, Pansy?'

'Why, God did, I expect, though I can't think how He got time for such a lot of things; and Millie Judd says that He has to make a new moon every month, or mend the old ones over again, I don't quite remember which.'

'Yes, God made him, Pansy, and all the other birds too. And yet though there are so many millions of them, not one of those little brown sparrows falls to the ground and dies without God knowing all about it.'

'Really, mother?' Pansy asked, putting her seven-year-old head on one side and gazing contemplatively at the sparrow, who was preening his feathers in leisurely content after that savoury insect morsel.

'Yes, really, my doubting little daughter.'

'But how do you know, mother? Did God tell you?'

'It is in the Bible. When you know how to read, you will be able to find it for yourself,' Mrs. Vant answered.

'I think I'll say my prayers, mother; perhaps God will think I am naughty if I don't,' Pansy said,

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after a minute or two of careful consideration, with knitted brows.

'That is a good girlie; come kneel down here by mother's knee.' Mrs. Vant drew Pansy closer to her as she spoke, and her hands lingered lovingly on the little girl's golden curls as she listened to the childish petitions which embodied Pansy's spiritual wants—

'Pray God bless mother and father, grandpapa and grandmamma in England, all kind friends everywhere; make poor Moolah a good English Christian, and don't let me be a bad girl any more. Oh, and please look after that little sparrow, and don't let him die too soon, because he is such a dear. Amen.'

'Pansy, why did you ask God to make Moolah an English Christian?' Mrs. Vant asked in some surprise, when, the end of her prayer arrived at, Pansy arose from her knees in a state of calm satisfaction at duty duly done.

'Because I didn't want her to be like Madame de Thressigne,' replied Pansy, trotting across the room to where Bloom's cradle stood, to see if her well-beloved doll still reposed in peaceful security.

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'Why not like Madame de Thressigne, dearie?'

'She isn't straight, you know, mother dear. The other day, when I was at her house, Valerie and I were at play in the drawing-room, and Lieutenant Carstairs called, and she told him that she was so glad to see him, though only a minute before she had said to Miss Jones that she positively hated Mr. Carstairs.'

'Pansy!'

'Yes, mother.' Pansy looked up in surprise, for her mother's tone was very solemn, though Pansy could not understand why it should be so.

'I want you to remember that you are a very little girl, and by no means able to understand all that you hear,' Mrs. Vant said impressively.

'Yes, mother, I'll try, though I forget most things that ought to be remembered. But Madame de Thressigne did tell a fib, didn't she? Yet I know she's a Christian, because she told me so when I asked her.'

'Oh, Pansy! Did you ask her?' Mrs. Vant's tone was fairly horrified at the thought of her small daughter's indiscretion.

'Yes, mother, because I didn't think she could

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be; but she is French, and I suppose that makes a difference.'

Mrs. Vant was spared answering by the entrance of Captain Vant, who held a bundle of letters and papers in his hand.

'The English mail is in,' he said, addressing Mrs. Vant.

'Yes, it is early this week,' Mrs. Vant replied. 'Run away, Pansy, and stay with Moolah, while your father reads his letters.'

And Pansy, nothing loth, skipped away through the open window, and down the verandah steps, to join her ayah by the fountain basin, little dreaming of the momentous changes in her young life which hung on the packet of letters held in her father's hand.

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CHAPTER II

THE EVE OF CHANGES

'As the swift day rolls on,
Still, Lord, our Guardian be;
And keep the portals of our hearts
From evil free.'

PANSY'S home was in Chandernagore; and it was a very beautiful home too, standing in a pretty, well-laid-out garden. There were black servants, who did the work of the house and garden, who washed the clothes, or made new ones, and cooked the dinners. Then there was the ayah, or nurse, whose exclusive duty was to take care of Pansy, to play with her, give her her baths, and see that no harm came to her.

Pansy had no little brothers and sisters, and not very many playfellows; therefore her ayah, whose

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name was Moolah, often had to join the little girl's games and help to while away the lonely hours.

But children who live in India are not so lively or so vigorous in their play as those whose homes are in cooler climes. Even Pansy, who was strong and healthy, was often languid and fretful, not able to run about, but obliged to lie in a hammock hung in the coolest part of the verandah, while Moolah swung a fan of palm leaves to keep away mosquitoes and give her more air.

Chandernagore was not so dismal and depressing as some Indian towns are; on the contrary, it was bright and pretty, with extensive pleasure-grounds. The residents were chiefly French people, with only a sprinkling of English families.

Pansy was only a tiny baby when Captain and Mrs. Vant had come to live in Chandernagore, so that she could remember no other home.

Early on the morning following that evening when Pansy objected to say her prayers, Mrs. Vant came into the little girl's room with a very grave and even sorrowful face.

'Pansy, when Moolah has finished dressing you,

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come into the garden; I want to tell you something.'

'Yes, mother, I'm just coming. May I bring Bloom? She looks rather pale this morning,' Pansy said, with a look of anxious solicitude at Bloom's vermilion-coloured cheeks.

'Yes, bring your dolly, my pet;' and Mrs. Vant went hurriedly from the room.

She was pacing slowly to and fro under the shade of a huge banyan tree when Pansy joined her. The sun was not fully up yet, and the air was delightfully cool and fresh.

'There, mother, doesn't Bloom look nice this morning? I got the dhobee (washerwoman) to wash her best clothes yesterday; poor dear Bloom, I don't like her to have to wear dirty clothes.'

Bloom having been duly inspected and admired, Mrs. Vant sat down on a garden seat and took Pansy on to her lap.

'Pansy, would you like to go and visit grandmamma and grandpapa in England?'

'Me, mother, and Bloom?'

'Yes, dear. I think they would be very pleased to have the little grandchild they have never seen,'

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Mrs. Vant replied slowly, as though the words hurt her a little.

'But you and father will go too, won't you, mother?' Pansy asked, looking up at her mother in sudden fear at the suggestion of separation that lingered in Mrs. Vant's tone.

'No, dear; you will have to be a brave, good girlie, and do without father and mother for a whole year,' Mrs. Vant said, her voice shaking a little.

'Mother, I can't go without you; I want to stop here!' wailed Pansy, dropping Bloom unregarded to the ground, while she crept closer into the sheltering arms that encircled her.

'But you cannot, my pet. Now listen to what mother has to tell you before you cry any more tears, or your eyes will be red when you go into breakfast, and father will be grieved.'

'Yes, mother, I'm listening,' came in a muffled voice from where Pansy's face was hidden on her mother's shoulder.

'Queen Victoria wants father to go and help to keep some naughty, troublesome people in order'— began Mrs. Vant; but Pansy interrupted her.

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'Couldn't what's-her-name — I mean Queen Victoria—send somebody else? I don't want father to go.'

'A soldier's first duty, Pansy, is to obey; and father has no choice but to go. It is not a place to which a little girl can be taken, and so we have decided to send you and Bloom home to England, to stay with grandmamma and grandpapa, until we can come home too.'

'But who will kiss me good-night, and hear me say my prayers?'

'There will always be someone who will be kind to mother's Pansy; and God will hear the prayers, my pet.'

'When will I go, mother? And will Moolah go too?'

'Yes, Moolah will go to take care of you; and father will take you down to Calcutta next week, and see you safely into the care of Colonel and Mrs. Raynor, who are going back to England.'

'Shall we go in a ship—a real one, with sails, and chimney-pots, and a goat in it?' asked Pansy, a delighted anticipation chasing the gloom from her face.

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'I'm not quite sure about the goat, but there is no doubt that the ship will not be lacking in sails and chimney-pots,' Mrs. Vant answered, with a little smile, that did not, however, stay very long upon her countenance.

'Then I think I will be glad to go,' Pansy said, with an ecstatic skip on the ground; but coming into collision with poor Bloom's prostrate body as she slid down from her mother's arms, her rejoicing as promptly turned to lamentation once more.

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CHAPTER III

PANSY IN CALCUTTA

'God is in heaven. Does He care,
Or is He good to me?
Yes; all I have to eat or wear
'Tis God that gives it me.'

PANSY'S blue eyes opened very widely when she drove with her father through the streets of Calcutta. There were the stately piles of the official buildings, the square, flat-roofed blocks of warehouses, and the mansions of the rich; endless streets of little mean houses, that had a mixed population of all sorts and conditions of men; great temples for Hindoo worship, and many churches and chapels where the servants of the only true God might meet.

But there were not many days in which Pansy might drive about the streets with her father and

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enjoy the sights and sounds of that mighty Eastern city; for the time very soon came when, holding tightly on to Moolah's hand, Pansy stood on the deck of the great steamship Pride of the East, and watched the fast-receding little steam-tug which was bearing Captain Vant and the pilot back to Calcutta.

'Panthy, come and play. There are lovely chairs downstairs that turn round and round; we'll have such fun,' coaxed Elsie Raynor, slipping a chubby hand into Pansy's, and gently trying to drag her towards the staircase leading down to the grand saloon.

'I can't—not yet; I'm not recovered,' Pansy answered in a stifled voice, caused by frequent use of a wet little pocket handkerchief.

'Isn't you well, then, poor thing?' inquired Elsie, looking with sympathetic anxiety at her little new friend.

'I's as well as can be expected under the circumstances,' retorted Pansy in a lofty, though still stifled and husky tone; she was too tearful to be really dignified yet.

'Poor thing!' murmured Elsie, her own brown

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eyes clouding over with a mist of tears as she wondered how she would have felt if it had been her father instead of Pansy's that the boat was bearing to land.

But her sympathy added the last touch to Pansy's overstrained powers of endurance, and flinging her arms more tightly round her ayah, she burst into a storm of hysterical sobs, that speedily brought a number of the passengers to the spot to see what was the matter.

Mrs. Raynor was down in the cabin unpacking, and the colonel was away at the other part of the vessel looking after the welfare of the regiment which was returning under his charge to England.

'Poor little girl! Is she all alone? inquired a very stout lady, attired in a brown holland dust cloak, and carrying a huge red sunshade.

'What a shame to send so young a child without her mother, or anyone! Really, some people have no feeling,' said another lady in quite an angry tone, which stilled Pansy's sobs as though by magic.

'I beg your pardon,' she said, uncovering her face, and drawing herself away from Moolah into a very erect position,—'my mother couldn't come

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with me, because Queen Victoria sent father up country to a place where the people quarrel, and mother had to go with him. I am with Colonel and Mrs. Raynor, and I'm going to stay with grandmamma and grandpapa in England.'

'Poor dear little child!' exclaimed the lady who had been angry, taking out her handkerchief and wiping her eyes.

'Please don't,' pleaded Pansy, with a womanly effort at self-control, 'it makes me feel so bad.'

The steam-tug was getting very small now, and the handkerchief waved by Captain Vant was nothing but a moving speck of white.

'Elsie, where is Pansy?' called the voice of Mrs. Raynor from the top of the staircase; then seeing the little group gathered at the side of the deck, she came forward.

'Ah, little Pansy! that is nearly the last that you will be able to see of your father; so suppose you come with me and see the cunning little place where you are to sleep,' she said, holding out her hand to the forlorn little figure who was making so brave an effort at self-control.

Pansy turned away, with one last lingering look

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at the fast-vanishing tug, then slipping her hand into Mrs. Raynor's, went with that lady down to the cabins opening off the grand saloon, Elsie and Moolah following behind, while the other passengers sauntered away to their various amusements and occupations.

Mrs. Raynor was a much older lady than Pansy's mother, and had a number of lively, noisy boys and girls, ranging in age from Lionel aged thirteen down to baby Fritz, who could only just begin to creep on all fours, and whose little length of life was counted by months, not years.

Among so many children Pansy at first was quite shy and bewildered; they made so much noise, and tumbled over each other so unceremoniously, that she could not understand it at all. But with Mrs. Raynor she was at home at once; indeed, it would have taken a much harder heart than Pansy's to have withstood the charm of that sweet, motherly face and those gracious, winning ways. Her own children adored her, and other people's children never failed to love her.

Captain Vant had been very wise when he trusted his only child to the care of his colonel's

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wife, for of all people Mrs. Raynor was best fitted for such a charge.

But Pansy, of course, could not understand all this; she only knew that God was caring for her, and would always care for her if she was a good girl.

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CHAPTER IV

THE VOYAGE

'Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the angry sea.'

'THERE, Pansy, that is where you are to sleep. Moolah will have the berth below, while Elsie and Dora will have the two other berths.'

Pansy looked in great surprise at the queer little recesses, one above another, which were called berths, and wondered how it would feel to get into them; but not knowing quite what to say, she forbore comment, and asked instead what the little box hanging upon the wall was for.

'That is a folding wash-basin,' explained Mrs. Raynor; and then she unfastened something, and

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the queer little box fell down and opened itself out, revealing a good-sized basin, a tiny soap-dish, and a looking-glass.

'Oh!' said the astonished Pansy.

'And here is another wonderful thing, Panthy,' burst in Elsie, pushing forward, anxious to do the honours of the place; there was a red velvet settee underneath the port-hole, which admitted light and air, and this she opened, showing a good-sized receptacle for clothes, books, and other small luggage. Topmost of the packages with which it was already half filled lay Bloom, attired in a gorgeous new robe of orange-coloured plush, with a broad purple sash.

Pansy gave a little cry of delight. She had not seen Bloom since she had left Chandernagore, and the new frock and sash were a great surprise to her.

'Oh, you dear, sweet Bloom! does you know that you and your little mother are on a big ship that is sailing away over the sea to England, where grandpapa and grandmamma live?' she asked, gently caressing her treasure, yet mindful not to rumple the new finery.

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'Let me nurse her; you look tired,' Elsie asked, with a first-rate imitation of mature womanhood.

'No, thank you; she is rather shy,' Pansy rejoined in a decided tone: she had been parted from her treasure too long to be willing to relinquish her speedily.

'Poor thing! but she will grow out of that when she is older,' said Elsie sagely; then having exhausted the cabin, she suggested that they should go to the saloon and try the possibilities of the chairs that swung round and round.

They found Dora lying on a couch at the end of the saloon; she was older than Elsie or Pansy, but could not run about as they could, because she had something the matter with her back.

The chairs were fixed on either side of a long table, and they had fine fun twisting each other round and round; then Elsie's two brothers came in, and there was more fun, though of a rather noisy sort; while Dora from her couch looked on and laughed as heartily as the rest.

'Time for tea, children,' said Mrs. Raynor, as the steward came in with a big tray, laden with

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bread and butter and milk for the children, and tea and cakes for the ladies.

There were quite a number of ladies gathered in the saloon by this time, and one or two gentlemen came in for a cup of tea, which they took standing.

Pansy had a mug of milk and a thick slice of bread and butter, but one of the ladies gave her a piece of sponge cake, with almonds on the top, which she greatly enjoyed. She had eaten more than half of it, and was measuring the remaining piece regretfully with her eyes, thinking how small it was growing, when chancing to look up, she saw Elsie's eyes fixed on her with a very reproachful look.

'You's rather gweedy,' she remarked in a disapproving voice.

'Why?' inquired Pansy, opening her eyes very widely.

'You didn't ask me to have any cake, and you said Bloom was shy when I wanted to nurse her,' retorted Elsie indignantly.

'But Bloom is shy, and I wanted the cake myself,' Pansy answered, intent on self-justification.

'But that is being gweedy. To be gweedy is

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howwid. No lady is ever gweedy,' Elsie replied, sticking to her text, and expounding it with great vigour.

Pansy's blue eyes became suddenly full of tears, and she looked wistfully at the piece of sponge cake, then away from the cake to Elsie; but that young lady had turned her head the other way, leaving Pansy only a decidedly affronted back view of her small person.

Pansy lifted the cake and slowly nibbled a bit off one corner, but somehow it didn't taste so good, and besides, Elsie's disapproval rankled in her heart and took away her appetite.

No one happened to be taking any notice of her just then. Mrs. Raynor was busily engaged in conversation with a group of ladies, Dora was listening to an animated description from the boys of the various wonderful sights on shipboard that they had already discovered, while Elsie still kept her face persistently in an opposite direction.

'Elsie, Elsie, I didn't mean to be greedy; will you have this piece?' Pansy asked in a penitent voice.

'Oh no, thank you; I couldn't be so wude as to

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depwive you of it,' retorted Elsie, though in a distinctly yielding voice, fully intending to accept, if only Pansy urged her.

But Pansy had turned sorrowfully away, and walking up to Dora's couch with her plate held firmly in both hands, she said timidly—

'The lady gave me such a big piece of cake, and I've eaten more than half; would you like to have this?'

'Oh, you are a dear!' Dora exclaimed, seizing the cake, and commencing on it forthwith; then when the boys loudly clamoured for a bite each, she held it to their eager lips, but quickly withdrew it, ere ever their teeth had time to close on a mouthful.

'Ha, ha! why weren't you quicker?' she asked, as she laughingly devoured the remaining portion.

'What made you give the cake to Dora? I wanted it,' said Elsie, when, the cake eaten, and the little burst of merriment subsided, Pansy returned to her place by Elsie, with the empty plate in her hands.

'You said that you didn't,' corrected Pansy.

'At firtht, but I thought that you would ask me

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again,' replied Elsie, feeling rather reluctantly that perhaps she had been greedy too.

They forgot that small disagreement, however, over the important duty of putting Bloom to bed—a task they shared nightly after that, both children being devoted doll-lovers, and Bloom a doll worthy of almost any amount of juvenile admiration.

But when Bloom was laid comfortably aside to slumber, and it became Pansy's turn to be undressed, she thought of her mother, and the dear home far away at Chandernagore; then came a blur of tears in the blue eyes, and not all Moolah's ministrations, Elsie's ardent caresses, or Mrs. Raynor's kindness could avail to stop the flow of Pansy's tears. She cried until from very weariness she could cry no longer, then fell asleep at last in Moolah's arms, worn out by the violence of her grieving.

Through the night, whilst Pansy and the other children slept, the man at the wheel steered The Pride of the East straight on through the dark waters, each hour widening the distance between Pansy and home. And the great God who holds the fierce winds in His keeping restrained their violence that night, and only a gentle breeze swept

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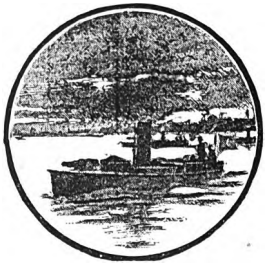
sighing through the rigging of the ship, and the great waves rolled up in a steady, even swell.

Then by and by a swiftly shooting gleam of light broke the gloomy darkness of the Eastern sky, followed by another, and another, each one broader, brighter, and rosier than the last, until with a brilliant completeness the sun rose out of the watery dip of the horizon to begin a new day.



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CHAPTER V

THROUGH THE RED SEA

'Lead us on our journey,
Be Thyself the Way
Through terrestrial darkness
To celestial day.'

PANSY soon became accustomed to life on board ship, and as she was not sea-sick she had a merry time with her new playmates.

Of course she missed her father and mother very much, and there were times when of all the people on that big ship she was the most miserable; but they were not of long duration, for young as she was, the little girl tried to bear her trouble of separation bravely, and most times succeeded pretty well.

The sailors were very kind to the children,

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teaching them new games, telling them stories, and singing them songs of the sea.

At Aden, where they lay at anchor for some hours, Pansy saw the little negro boys diving to the bottom of the big water-tanks for coppers; but the performance of this feat frightened her dreadfully, for it did not seem possible to her that they would ever come up alive again.

'Will England be like this?' she asked Mrs. Raynor a little wistfully, as she contrasted the beauty of Chandernagore's trimly-kept gardens with the sterile barrenness of Aden.

'No, little Pansy; England is very lovely, such green meadows and leafy lanes as you have never even dreamed of,' Mrs. Raynor answered, the happy tears coming into her eyes as she thought of the English home from which she had been parted for so long a time.

'Are you glad we are going to England?' Pansy asked, noticing with the sharpness of a child that the lady's eyes were wet.

'Yes, Pansy—very, very glad.'

'Oh, I thought perhaps you were sorry, because

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you looked as if you would like to cry. I'm sorry, that is why I cry.'

'Don't you know that people cry sometimes because they are glad as well as when they are sorrowful?' Mrs. Raynor asked.

Pansy shook her head doubtfully. 'I shouldn't; it makes you feel so bad when you cry, and your handkerchief gets so wet and messy. I shall only cry when I'm sorry; though I don't suppose I shall be very glad about anything for a long time now—not until next year, when father and mother come to England.'

Here Pansy put her head in a quick, abrupt fashion down on to her kind friend's lap, and her handkerchief was very wet indeed before the head was lifted again.

'Panthy, Panthy, where are you?' shouted Elsie at the top of her voice, as she hunted round the deck for her playfellow.

Pansy, however, was in the very midst of her affliction, and kept her head held down on Mrs. Raynor's lap.

'Pansy, do you hear Elsie calling you?' that lady asked, stroking the child's head gently.

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'Yes,' replied Pansy in an unwilling voice.

'Why do you not tell her where you are, then?'

'Because I don't want to,' she admitted candidly; but a moment later the possibility of choice was taken from her, for Elsie darted round the corner of the striped awning behind which Mrs. Raynor's deck-chair was placed, and discovered the object of her search.

'Lionel wants you; he and Phil are on the lower deck, and we're having such fun!' announced Elsie, skipping with glee.

But Pansy looked wistfully at Mrs. Raynor, as though asking permission to remain with her; two ladies, however, strolled up at this moment, and engaged the colonel's wife in conversation, so Pansy reluctantly went off with Elsie to the lower deck, where Lionel and Phil were at play. There were several other children with them, and the fun was of an unusually riotous character.

They were merchants, so they said, crossing the desert in a caravan; they had some deck-chairs piled high with rugs and cushions to represent the camels laden with merchandise, which they dragged

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slowly across the deck. While the lumbering procession stumbled slowly past the entrance to the cooking galley, Lionel and another boy sprang out upon it, in the character of wandering Arabs bent on pillage. Then arose an uproarious shouting, and kicks and cuffs were very liberally exchanged between the assailers and the assailed.

Pansy, who with Elsie was in charge of the last 'camel,' a rather antiquated chair, fallen weak in one leg, and loaded with books, work-baskets, a heavy writing-desk, and two tennis racquets, did not think the new game quite so nice as some of their other pastimes. She would rather have had 'Here we come gathering nuts in May' upstairs under the striped awning, or played with the dolls in the big saloon. The noise frightened her rather, though she would not like to have admitted it; and Phil had given her an unwary tap on the head with a walking-stick, in his endeavours to rescue the caravan from the hands of the invading Arabs.

But Elsie, who was armed with a toy gun, was doing valiant warfare, her weapon doing threefold duty as a musket, bayonet, and short-range pistol.

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She shouted to Pansy to help her, and the two small girls defended their infirm old 'camel' with great vigour and spirit; until Phil, who had seized Lionel and was endeavouring to make him prisoner, stepped back on to a falien tennis racquet, and losing his balance, came crashing on to the infirm 'camel,' which in its turn promptly upset, and somehow when it came to the ground, Pansy lay underneath, with the heavy writing-desk across her left leg.

Her cry of pain hushed the noise of the fray instantly, and Lionel rushed to pick her up, while Elsie flew to find her mother, crying, 'Panthy ith hurt! Panthy ith killed!'

Mrs. Raynor's face was very white as she hastily followed Elsie's flying feet back to the lower deck. Thinking of that other mother far away in Chandernagore, she would rather have heard that accident had come to one of her own children than to this little child for whose welfare she had constituted herself responsible.

After that one cry of pain Pansy had uttered no sound, but lay on the floor of the deck, white and unconscious.

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Lionel and Phil had pulled away all the tumble of baggage and lifted the writing-desk from Pansy's leg, but they had not ventured to lift her from the ground, fearing lest they might increase the injury already done.

Mrs. Raynor stooped and gathered the little form into her arms, but as she lifted her the pain of movement aroused Pansy for a moment; she opened her eyes, looked at Mrs. Raynor, then quietly fainted away again.

'Run, Lionel, for your father and the doctor!' Mrs. Raynor cried in a keenly-distressed tone. Then she walked swiftly and steadily into the big saloon, and laid Pansy on Dora's couch, Dora being stretched in a hammock that was slung under the awning on the upper deck.

Colonel Raynor and Dr. Snell quickly appeared, followed by Moolah, who wept and wrung her hands, lamenting as only an Indian ayah can.

Dr. Snell was a young Irishman, very clever and pleasant, but afflicted with a stammering tongue, which sent him into violent irritation when it prevented him making himself quickly understood.

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'Br-r-ring w-w-w-water, and t-take that h-h-howling w-w-woman away,' he said, flinging his head back to indicate Moolah, who was weeping and moaning in a truly dismal fashion.

But Mrs. Raynor was wiser than Dr. Snell, and insisted on the ayah being allowed to remain, knowing well that when Pansy opened her eyes again she would want the most familiar face to be bending over her.

It was some minutes before the doctor succeeded in bringing the little girl back to consciousness, and even then it was only to a realisation of sharp suffering. His examination of the injured leg was the worst bit of all; but there was a fine amount of fortitude in Pansy's composition, and she lay very still, not screaming or struggling, only the tight clasp of her arms round Moolah's neck showing how great was the strain upon her powers of endurance.

'There, I-I-I am not g-g-going to h-h-hurt you any m-m-more t-t-to-day,' announced Dr. Snell, when the poor leg had been pulled and twisted, bathed and bandaged, and finally done up in splints.

Pansy heaved a great sigh of relief, but no words

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escaped her little white lips, for she was so exhausted with bearing the pain that talking was out of the question.

'I think she had better be carried to her berth now,' Mrs. Raynor said, when the doctor had settled the poor leg to his own satisfaction.

'What?' roared the Irishman, his wrath overcoming his politeness, and for once quite avoiding his usual hesitancy of speech.

'I said we had better move her at once, and get it over,' repeated Mrs. Raynor, with some surprise in her tone; privately she was wondering why the doctor was so angry.

'To move her would be to make her endure all t-t-this a-a-gony over a-a-again. S-s-s-she will have t-t-to stop where she is,' said Dr. Snell, making manful attempts to overcome his besetment.

'Lie here? Why, that is quite impossible,' exclaimed the colonel and his wife in a breath.

'Never-the-less i-it w-w-will have to be,' retorted the doctor; and as, of course, he knew best what was good for poor little Pansy, no one ventured any more suggestions about having her moved.

The steward and his helpers were already

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commencing to lay the long table for dinner, and a screen had to be hastily improvised, by hooking curtains to the ceiling, and thus shutting Pansy's couch off from the rest of the saloon.

She was very glad when it was all done and she was left with only Moolah sitting beside her. The ayah had a big fan, which she was waving to and fro with a lazy, rhythmic movement that made Pansy quite sleepy; she did not know that the doctor had put some drops of a sedative in the stuff he had coaxed her to drink, but gradually the sensation of acute pain abated, a feeling of utter restfulness took its place, and with bright visions of all sorts of lovely things dancing before her eyes, Pansy drifted into slumber.

She roused after a while, and rubbed her eyes in the vain endeavour to remember where she was. It was very, very hot, and a soft, brilliant light seemed to be all around her, while a clatter of knives and forks, the clink of glass and the subdued hum of conversation, broken now and then by a soft laugh, made her all at once very wide awake indeed.

She tried to sit up, but could not stir, though the

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attempt at movement sent a thrill of pain through the injured leg, and a cry of surprise and affright escaped her, for she had forgotten that she was hurt.

Then the curtains were swept aside, and a lovely lady stood beside her, dazzling Pansy's eyes with the splendour of the shining silken raiment.

'Mother!' she shrieked, in an ecstasy of delight.

'No, not mother, dear, only Auntie Raynor,' said the soothing voice of Mrs. Raynor, as she bent over the child.

Pansy heaved a sigh of bitter disappointment, and some hot tears welled up in her eyes.

'I want my mother,' she said, with a pathetic brevity that brought tears to Mrs. Raynor's eyes too.

'Yes, darling, and your mother wants you too, and just as badly; but the great, wise God saw that it would be best for you to be parted for a time, so mother is left in Chandernagore, and you are sailing up the Red Sea, on your way to England, to stay with grandmamma and grandpapa,' Mrs.

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Raynor answered, kneeling down by the couch and drawing Pansy's bewildered little head to rest on her shoulder, all regardless of crumpling her silken finery.

'What is the matter with me? I can't move myself,' Pansy asked, full recollection not having returned to her.

'Do you not remember, dear, that you were playing with the boys, and that big writing-desk tumbled on to your leg? The poor leg was so bruised that we had to bind it up very carefully.'

'Oh yes, I remember, and it did hurt dreadful,' sighed Pansy, sinking back on her pillow, very white and tearful.

'W-w-well, y-young l-l-l-lady, I hope that you f-f-feel a little better?' said Dr. Snell, coming up to Pansy's couch, and standing beside Mrs. Raynor.

Pansy gave a little start of surprise, and tried to see round the corner of the curtain, which the doctor had left slightly undrawn. 'Are you having dinner?' she asked, addressing Mrs. Raynor, and ignoring the doctor entirely.

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'Dinner is almost over now, dearie; by and by, when it is quite over, I will come and sit by you,' Mrs. Raynor said, rising from her kneeling posture, in order to go back to her place at the table.

'Meanwhile I will stay, if you d-d-don't object t-t-to my company,' the doctor said, seating himself by her side.

Pansy gave a discontented little wriggle, but did not speak. Just then Moolah, with her dusky face and snow-white draperies, glided in with something nice in a cup for the little girl to drink; and Dr. Snell, seeing that his small patient had no great liking for him, quietly slipped away, to Pansy's great relief, for in her small way she disliked him very much indeed.

When dinner was over, Mrs. Raynor came and stayed with her for a long time, until, worn-out with all the pain and excitement she had gone through, Pansy fell into a deep, quiet sleep.

Then one by one the lights were turned out, until there was only a shadowy twilight all over the room, and Moolah lay stretched on the floor by her side, calmly slumbering, with her head on a pillow.

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The Pride of the East never swerved from her course, but held steadily on her way through the blue waters of the Red Sea, each revolution of the screw bringing her nearer to England and the end of her journey.

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CHAPTER VI

MORE PAIN FOR PANSY

'Even when He chideth,
Tender is His tone;
None but He shall guide us,
We are His alone.'

THE next day Pansy awoke to more suffering, and as the long hot hours passed on it became evident that her endurance was being tried to the utmost.

Dr. Snell came out in quite a new light; hitherto Pansy had always thought of him as 'a nasty, noisy man, who could not talk plain.' But it was quite wonderful how nice he could be, and how carefully he nursed Bloom, as he sat by Pansy's side and told her entertaining stories, or bathed her hot forehead with some delicious perfume. Nothing seemed too much trouble for him to do, though Pansy was certainly

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very exacting and irritable before the day wore to its close.

Late in the afternoon, just before the children's tea was served, Pansy fell into a slight doze, and leaving Moolah to watch by her, Dr. Snell went up to the deck to get a little fresh air. He had been sitting in the saloon for so long that he felt tired and stuffy.

There were only a few sailors visible at that hour; most of the ladies were taking a siesta in their berths, while the gentlemen had found cooler corners for themselves in different parts of the vessel. The boards of the deck were so hot that they seemed almost to scorch the soles of the doctor's thin canvas deck-shoes, as he paced to and fro under the striped awning that seemed to afford no shade at all. He was soon glad to beat a retreat, and made his way down the stairs to the saloon once more.

But before he reached it the sounds of excited childish voices in loud recrimination met his ears, and fearing lest Pansy might be disturbed, he hastened on to quell the small revolution. To his amazement, however, it was Pansy whose voice was

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the loudest, and he arrived on the scene to find that by dint of violent exertion she had struggled to a sitting posture, and with a face crimsoned by passion was pouring out a storm of abuse at Elsie, who in her turn was defending herself in equally hot and angry tones.

'B-b-bless m-m-me! what i-is t-t-the m-m-m-matter?' stammered poor Dr. Snell, articulating worse than ever.

'She stole poor dear Bloom when I was asleep, and she won't give her back to me, and I can't reach her!' screamed Pansy, beating her clenched fists on to the pillow in the impotence of her helpless rage.

'I didn't thteal her, I only took her gently away whiltht Panthy wath athleep. Her health will thuffer if she can't get more freth air,' retorted Elsie, still holding Bloom just out of Pansy's reach.

'Give her to me, you nasty thing! She isn't your baby, she is mine!' shrieked Pansy, bursting into a tempest of sobs, and preparing to fling herself from her couch.

But Dr. Snell laid one quieting hand on her,

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while with the other he seized Bloom from Elsie and restored her to her rightful mistress.

'Dr. Snell, what is the matter?' It was Mrs. Raynor who spoke, and she came hurriedly from her cabin, clothed in a long white dressing-gown. She had been taking a siesta, when she was aroused from quiet slumber by the noise of the children.

'A g-g-good d-d-deal will be the matter if we do not take care,' Dr. Snell answered, as he forcibly put Pansy back on to her pillows and laid Bloom beside her.

'Panthy ith howwid gweedy,' remarked Elsie, with a little vindictive stamp on the floor.

'And Elsie is dreadfully selfish,' retorted Mrs. Raynor, as she busied herself in caring for the invalid.

'Me, mamma?' exclaimed Elsie, opening her eyes very widely as this new idea was presented to her.

'Yes, you. Think how cruel you were to poor little Pansy to try to take Bloom away while she was sleeping. How grieved Jesus Christ must have been to find you were so naughty.'

'He couldn't thee, I don't think, for the blindth

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were all clothed,' Elsie replied, with a half-fearful glance round.

'Yes, He could. Jesus Christ sees into the hearts of people, and judges them by the motives which prompt their actions. You wanted us to think that you were taking Bloom away because it would be good for her; but Jesus Christ knew that you wanted her because you were selfish.' Mrs. Raynor's voice was kind and pleasant as she talked, but Elsie wriggled very uneasily, then attempted a little self-justification—

'Bloom hath got thuch a pwetty fwock.'

'So has your dollie. Where is she?'

'Nettleth ith a nathty old thing,' asserted Elsie.

'Never mind; run and find her, and we will see if she can't be improved a little.'

Elsie brightened up then, and trotted away to find Nettles, who had been very much discarded and despised since Bloom had appeared on the scene.

'If t-t-that w-w-were m-m-m-my child I should w-whip her,' said Dr. Snell, looking after Elsie's retreating figure.

'No, you would not, doctor,' Mrs. Raynor said,

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with a little laugh, as she wiped Pansy's hot face with a cool clean handkerchief.

'W-w-why n-n-not, pray?'

'Because you would soon find that there is an easier way of making children good than by whipping them. Pansy, my darling, don't cry so; Elsie will not take Bloom again.'

'My leg hurts so, and I want mother!' wailed Pansy, burying her face in her pillow.

'I was a-a-afraid so,' muttered Dr. Snell, with a significant look at Mrs. Raynor. Then he began swiftly and dexterously to unfasten the bandaging round Pansy's leg, for in her struggles to reach Bloom she had very much disturbed them. The process of rebandaging was very painful, and Pansy, with her head on Mrs. Raynor's kind shoulder, cried very pitifully the while.

'Where has Moolah g-g-gone?' Dr. Snell asked, when he had settled Pansy once more.

'I do not know; I thought she was here,' Mrs. Raynor answered, taking up a large fan and beginning to fan Pansy, whose sobs had become less distressing now that the doctor's hands were no longer pulling her poor leg about.

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'I-I-I-I will go and look for her if you will remain here,' the doctor said; and then he went away, leaving Mrs. Raynor alone with Pansy.

'I do want mother so. I'm sure I can't be good without her,' sighed Pansy, whose conscience was beginning to chide her for yielding to the violence of her passion.

'But do you know that your mother could not make you good, though she might *help* you to be good?' said Mrs. Raynor, still gently swinging the big fan.

'Oh, but she could. My mother is very clever,' Pansy replied, with an air of proud proprietorship.

'Only Jesus Christ can make you really good. Do you ever ask Him, Pansy?'

'Sometimes; but it doesn't make much difference. I used to think He didn't have time to attend to little girls; but mother said that He does, and that He looks after the sparrows too.'

'Do you know why it never seemed to make any difference, little Pansy?'

'No, I couldn't understand it at all,' admitted Pansy, who had entirely ceased to weep.

'Because when you had asked Jesus Christ to

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help you, you did nothing further. He will not help you to be good unless you will help yourself too.'

'How?' asked Pansy. 'I couldn't keep Elsie from running away with dear Bloom.'

'No, but you might have rung your bell to summon someone to take her away, instead of going into a passion and dragging your leg out of the splints.'

'Oh, I see,' Pansy said, and then became very quiet indeed.

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CHAPTER VII

PANSY'S FIRST VICTORY

'Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour,
Once became a child like me;
Oh that in my whole behaviour
He my pattern still may be!
All my nature is unholy,
Pride and passion dwell within;
But the Lord was meek and lowly,
And was never known to sin.'

A WEEK of close confinement to the couch in the saloon, and then Pansy was pronounced well enough to be carried on deck and laid under the awning during the cool hours of the morning and the evening. This was a great pleasure to her, for her imprisonment below had proved very tedious and irksome to her.

Elsie also was delighted to have her playmate convalescent again, and dressed Nettles in a new

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frock that Mrs. Raynor had made, in order to do honour to the occasion when Pansy was first carried up to the deck.

Nettles was not a handsome doll. Her colour had disappeared owing to the combined influences of Indian sunshine and too frequent bathing; her figure was not good, for she had lost sawdust heavily from a gaping wound in her back, and of her limbs there was only one arm and half a leg remaining. Her name even had fallen from its first dignity, for she had begun her career as Henrietta, which for the sake of endearment had dwindled to Netta, which in its turn had changed to Nettles, after old age and decay had weaned the affections of Elsie from her toy.

But Mrs. Raynor had made a yellow silk frock, trimmed with white lace and blue ribbons, this charming combination being so artfully arranged as to hide the worst deformities under which poor Nettles suffered. Arrayed in this costume, even Bloom's waxen fairness had no chance against Nettles; and Elsie returned to her old allegiance with never a thought or wish for any other baby.

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Pansy's mattress was laid very near to where Dora's hammock was swung, and the two children were brought up when the fiercest heat of the day was over.

Elsie had run backwards and forwards carrying cushions and fans, and now, when the invalids were settled, she went back to the saloon to fetch up Nettles from the corner of Pansy's unused berth, where she had been stowed. A number of other things had been put aside in that berth also, and Elsie had to rummage a little before she could find her.

At length Nettles was drawn forth from under a pile of things too various to mention, and a dismal cry burst from the little girl as she beheld the condition of the new frock. A bottle of violet ink had lain upon the doll, and not having been corked tightly enough, the bright-hued fluid had dyed the face and dress of Nettles a brilliant violet colour.

'Oh! oh! oh!' screamed Elsie, as she rushed through the saloon and up the stairs towards the deck, hugging Nettles closely to her as she ran, with the result that her own pinafore speedily

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partook of the colour with which the doll was so plentifully soaked.

Mrs. Raynor had ordered the children's tea to be brought on deck, and they were sitting grouped round Pansy's couch with their mugs of milk and water and slices of bread and butter, when poor unfortunate Elsie appeared at the top of the stairs.

'Look at Elsie! What has she been doing?' cried Lionel; he was the first of the group to notice her.

'Oh! oh! oh!' wailed Elsie again, and rushing to her mother, she flung Nettles into Mrs. Raynor's lap.

'My dear child, what have you done?' exclaimed that lady.

'It wathn't me, I found her tho!' cried Elsie, clinging to her mother in the bitterness of her affliction.

'But how'— began Mrs. Raynor, when Colonel Raynor came on deck with the empty ink-bottle in his hand and a very vexed look on his face.

'Who did this?' he asked; and then, catching

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sight of Elsie's discoloured pinafore, he said sternly, 'Have you been playing with my ink?'

'No, papa; but thomeone hath thpoiled my poor dear Nettleth, and her beautiful new fwock ith all thpoiled too!' wailed Elsie, shedding tears profusely and rubbing her eyes with her ink-stained fists.

'Oh, Elsie, you're making yourself worse every minute, you'll be violet all over if you don't take care!' shouted Phil, going off into a fit of laughter at the spectacle, and nearly tumbling off his seat by reason of his merriment.

'Run down to Moolah, dear, and ask her to make you look nice, then come up and have your tea,' whispered Mrs. Raynor; and Elsie obeyed her, while Lionel hung Nettles out to dry.

After questioning the boys concerning the uncorked condition of the bottle, Colonel Raynor suddenly remembered that he must have put it away himself, and in his haste forgot to cork it up tightly.

They were all making merry at Colonel Raynor's expense when Elsie reappeared, looking very tearful and disconsolate, and with sundry and divers

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smudges and smears of violet still remaining on her doleful countenance.

'Come here, Elsie,' called Pansy, indicating a corner of her mattress, which Elsie took, and for a little while attended principally to her tea, indulging at intervals in tearful sniffs.

No one appeared to take much notice of her, though, and after a time she became more cheerful; only Pansy watched her with a thoughtful little pucker between her brows.

'Bloom would like to go for a walk; will you take her, Elsie?' she asked, when Elsie had finally pushed aside her mug and plate.

'Oh, may I?' cried Elsie, starting up in great delight at the prospect of a promenade with Bloom.

'Yes, you may have her,' Pansy replied, a little shortly, and then she turned away a little, as though it hurt her to see her favourite in Elsie's hands.

Dr. Snell was lounging with some other gentlemen in the stern of the vessel, when Elsie came sailing along, holding her head as high as she could, and carrying Bloom very quietly.

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'Pretty little girl that little Raynor,' said one of the gentlemen.

'Yes; all Colonel Raynor's children are nice-looking,' remarked another gentleman.

'W-w-what is that she has got?' asked Dr. Snell, as having reached the limit of her promenade, Elsie turned and marched back again.

'A doll, I should say,' laughed the first gentleman.

Dr. Snell darted after Elsie's retreating figure, and laying hold of her, demanded, 'W-w-who s-s-s-said you m-m-m-might have that d-d-d-doll?'

'Panthy did. Bloom ith not very well, and I am taking her for a walk.'

'L-l-l-look here, young lady, let us g-g-g-go and verify that statement,' he said, taking her hand, and commencing to walk with her.

But such an arrangement by no means chimed in with Elsie's ideas of fitness, and with an exclamation of anger she snatched her hand from the doctor's grasp, and set off at a run to reach Pansy.

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She looked once to see if the doctor was pursuing her, and by so doing she hung her foot in the end of a rope that lay loosely coiled on the deck, and came down crash, she above and Bloom below.

It was not all pain that made her cry out so sharply, though she had bruised her elbow and taken a big piece of skin off one knee. A glance at Bloom had shown her that that young lady had suffered even more seriously, for one side of her face and head was completely smashed in.

'Oh dear! oh dear! what thall I do? Panthy will be tho croth. And it ith all your fault, you howwid Dr. Thnell!' she exclaimed, struggling to a sitting posture, and breaking into most doleful sobs.

'I am afraid i-i-i-it w-w-will upset P-P-P-P-Pansy, and throw h-her b-b-b-back again. I-I-I told you once before that you were n-n-n-not to have that doll,' the doctor retorted with some heat; for of course he thought it was entirely Elsie's fault, and never once took any blame to himself for having given chase, and so brought about the catastrophe.

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At this juncture Lionel strolled up, his hands comfortably stowed away in his pockets, as is the habit of boys, be they high-born or lowly-placed. He looked calmly at his sobbing sister and the fuming doctor, then suddenly catching sight of poor disfigured Bloom, he exclaimed with great glee and animation, 'I say, Elsie, just won't there be a row about this business?' And before either the doctor or Elsie could interpose to prevent him, he was off like a dart, to communicate tidings of the disaster to Mrs. Raynor and Pansy.

'We had better g-g-g-go too. Come,' said the doctor, holding out his hand. And Elsie rose, her dismal little face still streaming with tears, and slipping her hand into the one he held out, went with him to make confession. Dr. Snell carried Bloom, the poor battered cheek hidden against his coat, so that Pansy might be spared as long as possible the sight of her favourite's disfigurement.

But Lionel had blurted out the story before they got there; and poor Pansy, all quivering with passion and misery, was lying with her face hidden in her pillow.

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At the sight of so much grief Elsie's sobs increased mightily in volume and strength, and she flung herself down by the mattress on which Pansy was lying, imploring her forgiveness in a pitifully incoherent fashion.

Pansy lay still for a minute or two, while Elsie wept and bewailed; and Mrs. Raynor and Dr. Snell stood quite silently by, watching Pansy with no little anxiety.

At last she lifted her face. 'I will forgive you, Elsie, but it is dreadful hard work'—here her lips quivered ominously, and Elsie's crying became a perfect howl of lamentation. 'I don't think you meant to smash dear Bloom, and I am trying to feel good about it, because Jesus Christ doesn't like unforgiving people'— But Pansy could get no further, and covering her face again, wept bitterly.

Dr. Snell seeing that Pansy was likely to do herself no serious injury, and being rather bothered than otherwise by the crying of the children, laid Bloom gently down on the mattress, and then strolled away.

But Mrs. Raynor leaned over and whispered in

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Pansy's ear, 'That is right, Pansy dear; you have gained your first victory over yourself.'

'I don't feel good, though,' retorted Pansy; and Mrs. Raynor smiled.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE VOYAGE

'God loves the little sparrows,
And guides them as they fly,
And feeds them in His kindness,
Lest they should faint and die.'

'Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.'

A GREAT number of days had passed away, during which the good ship had passed through the Suez Canal and the blue waters of the Mediterranean, had fought her way through the tempestuous waves of the Bay of Biscay, and was now sailing up the English Channel, the white cliffs of Dover in full view on one side, and on the other the shores of France.

It was about six o'clock on a lovely June evening, and the sea was dotted on all sides with

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pleasure-boats, yachts, fishing-smacks, brown-sailed luggers, and grimy-looking colliers. There were several larger vessels in sight also, and to the tired voyagers on the deck of The Pride of the East the scene looked charmingly animated and home-like.

Mrs. Raynor was gazing at the Dover heights through a rain of happy tears, while the colonel gnawed his moustache and fidgeted in order to keep his own emotion within decent limits. Their children, who had all been born in India, looked on in a state of wild excitement; but Pansy Vant, still a prisoner to her mattress, was very quiet and unenthusiastic. To her, landing in England meant severance from the friends who had been so kind to her, parting with the faithful Moolah, who had been her ayah ever since she could remember, and another ordeal of strange faces, from which her sensitive little soul shrank with a pitiful dread. So, while the other children shouted and laughed in their glee, Pansy lay white and still on her mattress, looking out into the unknown future with the exquisite mental pain that only extremely sensitive children endure. She was much better, Dr. Snell

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said, and would soon be able to run about as the other children did. But the pain and the enforced confinement to her mattress had made Pansy lose flesh and become quite pale and thin—a very different Pansy to the little girl who had trotted about in the gardens of Chandernagore.

'Pansy dear, let me lift you up; you ought to have a peep at Dover Castle; perhaps you will not have another opportunity for a very long time, and it is a most wonderful fortress,' Mrs. Raynor said, turning away from the deck railings to stoop over Pansy.

'Yes, and there's a gun there mounted on one of the towers, I think, that they call Queen Elizabeth's pocket pistol,' Lionel said, who was of a warlike turn of mind, and always found his chief interest in the modes and materials of warfare.

'Is that where grandpapa and grandmamma live?' Pansy inquired, with a sudden interest in the scenery.

'No, dear; Bardley Green is in Hertfordshire,' Mrs. Raynor said, as she busied herself in propping Pansy up on a cleverly-contrived bed-rest.

'How will we get to Bardley Green? Will the

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ship go there?' Pansy asked, intent now on gaining information.

'No; the ship will go no farther than London, and then your grandpapa will meet you there, and take you with him in a train down to Bardley Green,' Mrs. Raynor replied.

'Oh dear! I wish the ship would turn round and sail away back to Calcutta, and then I would find father, and we would go back to Chandernagore, where we would see mother, and that dear bright little sparrow, and everyone else.' Here Pansy broke down in good earnest, and had to be consoled and comforted by every one in turn; while Bloom, her face neatly bandaged with sticking-plaster, lay staring up at the cool grey of the English sky. But Pansy was too absorbed with other things to have any attention to bestow on her favourite just then. She was thinking very hard, and wondering what her grandpapa would be like. Presently her eyes closed, and Mrs. Raynor drew the light covering closer round her, thinking that she had gone to sleep.

Colonel Raynor came up just then, and with his wife stood looking at the little girl.

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'I wish that I had arranged with Vant to keep her until he comes home. I don't half like turning her out among strangers, especially such queer folk as those Forbishers are said to be.' Here the colonel felt his wife's hand laid on his arm with a restraining gesture, and Mrs. Raynor gently drew him away, and when they were well out of earshot, she told him how she had seen Pansy's eyelids quiver when he had been speaking, and that she did not think the child was really asleep.

Nor was she, having only shut her eyes because she was tired and dispirited, and because, child though she was, the gladness all around her jarred on her sensitive nature; being sad herself, she did not want to witness the radiant anticipations of her fellow-voyagers. This being so, Colonel Raynor's unfortunate remark was clearly heard by her, and understood also, and now the poor ignorant little soul was wading through a sea of doubt and terror because of the future — an agony of foreboding that would turn her happy dreams that night to black nightmare.

Mrs. Raynor came back after a little while, but Pansy's eyes were still closed, so that that lady

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began to hope that perhaps after all she had been mistaken, and Pansy had been really asleep all that time. She was soon undeceived, however, for a little catching sob, quickly stifled, reached her ear, and Pansy hastily dived her head under the light rug with which the lady had covered her.

'Pansy, I want to say something to you,' Mrs. Raynor said, as with a firm though gentle hand she drew the covering back, exposing Pansy's very tearful face.

'Yes, auntie,' replied Pansy, choking back another sob.

'It was not honourable of you to pretend that you were asleep when really you were awake all the time.'

'I'm very sorry,' Pansy answered, quite conscience-smitten now.

'So am I. Besides, I did not want you to know that Mr. and Mrs. Forbisher are peculiar. They will be very kind to you, and I do not think you will be unhappy with them, especially if you strive to be a good, brave girlie, and do the things that you know your mother would like you to do.'

'I'll try. But what are they like—grandpapa

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and grandmamma, I mean?' Pansy asked, her face looking very pitiful in her anxiety.

'I do not know Mr. and Mrs. Forbisher at all; and Colonel Raynor's remark was only based on an idle rumour, which probably has almost no foundation of truth.'

'Why did he say so, then?' inquired Pansy; and for once Mrs. Raynor was very hard driven for a suitable reply, and was only rescued from her dilemma by the appearance on the scene of Lionel and Phil, who came rushing up with the information they had just gained from the captain, to the effect that they would arrive at the London dock by about seven o'clock on the following morning.

'And shan't I be glad to get my feet on *terra firma* once more!' shouted Lionel, cutting extravagant capers in the excess of his glee.

'I like the sea. I mean to be a sailor and go all round the world like Captain Cook, and have plenty of shipwrecks and things,' drawled Phil, who, with his hands in his pockets, was strolling up and down with a true nautical roll.

'But if you're shipwrecked you will be drowned,

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and then you won't be able to come home again at all,' said Pansy the practical, interested by the subject under discussion into forgetting her troubles for a few minutes.

'That is just like a girl!' exclaimed Phil, with true masculine intolerance. 'You don't always get drowned when you are shipwrecked. Sometimes people are saved by clinging to the rigging, or they swim to shore in hencoops and things.'

'It would have to be a rather extra good hencoop, though, if you should happen to get your upset two or three hundred miles from land,' commented Lionel, with an air of superior wisdom that proved the reverse of soothing to his brother.

'How you do bother! Why, if you were so far out you'd take to the boats, of course; I was only speaking about ships wrecked in sight of shore.'

'Let us be very thankful, boys, that our voyage has been so successful that we have not had to try any of Phil's plans of escaping with our lives,' Mrs. Raynor said, finding that more of heat than was advisable was creeping into the conversation.

'We're not in yet, though; we might get

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wrecked on the Goodwins before to-morrow morning,' Phil said, with aggravating complacency.

'Oh, Phil, be quiet, I beg of you!' cried Mrs. Raynor.

But the shipwrecked idea having once entered into the children's imagination, it was by no means easily put aside, and had to be thoroughly discussed and enlarged upon. Lionel and Phil had, of course, several thrilling stories ready to hand of various catastrophes afloat, which they gave in turn with infinite relish, until Elsie and Dora were on the verge of tears, declaring that they could not be undressed or go to bed that night, as they would not like to be drowned in their little white nightgowns. And even Pansy thrilled and trembled and grew pale under the spell of such fearful eloquence.

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CHAPTER IX

GRANDPAPA FORBISHER

'Our lives enriched with gentle thought
And loving deeds may be,
A stream that still the nobler grows
The nearer to the sea.'

THE Pride of the East slowly swung to anchor in the grimy, dismal London dock, that not even the sweet brightness of the June morning could render attractive. She was late, and it was close on midday before the gangway was thrown across from the vessel to the shore, and the group of eager watchers were free to step on deck and greet the friends for whom they were waiting.

There was a noble-looking old lady who was seized upon by Mrs. Raynor, who called her mother, and who laughed and wept by turns. There were

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several gentlemen and ladies, friends of the other passengers, and the usual crowd consequent on the arrival of a large passenger vessel; and a Babel of tongues, a wild confusion of all sorts of sounds, it seemed to Pansy's unaccustomed ears.

There was a little old man, shabbily dressed, still lingering in painful nervousness and uncertainty on the quay-side; he carried a worn, bulgy carpet-bag, and seemed to be anxiously looking for someone. One or two busy officials whom he timidly accosted either shook their heads or pointed to the deck of the vessel, and then hurried on.

'We will take Pansy with us, as there seems to be no one here to meet her,' Colonel Raynor said; and then the party, with a huge pile of their smaller luggage, prepared to leave the vessel, leaving all the heavier packages to follow later on.

Colonel Raynor wore his uniform this morning, and crossed the gangway carrying Dora in his arms, and looking as fine a specimen of a British officer as ever wore Her Majesty's regimentals, or bore arms for her defence. As he stepped on shore the little old man approached him, and lifting up his wrinkled, anxious face, asked—

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'Am I addressing Colonel Raynor, if you please, sir?'

'Yes, I am Colonel Raynor,' that gentleman said, wondering who his questioner might be, and half inclined to think that the poor old fellow might be intending to ask an alms. While Dora stared at him rather rudely, and Lionel and Elsie, who were following close behind, drew themselves up a little, and held their heads proudly.

'I was instructed to ask—I was told—I mean I think you have got my little granddaughter, Pansy Vant, in your charge,' stammered the little old man, his nervousness increasing to a very painful degree as he found himself confronted by so many pairs of attentive eyes.

'Then you must be Mr. Forbisher?' Colonel Raynor said in a genial tone, holding out his hand to the trembling old man. He felt instinctively that though Mr. Forbisher might be poor and old, he was not the sort of man he had supposed him to be, and that Pansy would be safe in his care.

'Yes, sir, that is my name—Daniel Forbisher, at your pleasure;' and he touched his hat respectfully as he spoke.

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'Yes, we have Pansy with us; but I am sorry to say she is not in quite such good condition as we should have liked her to be. She met with an unfortunate accident just after we left Aden, which has kept her an invalid ever since; then she has fretted at the separation from her home and parents, and I think has suffered not a little in wondering to what sort of a home she was journeying.'

'Ah yes, just so, poor little dear, poor little dear!' the old man said, quite a little rain of tears tumbling down his wrinkled cheeks, to the great amazement of Elsie, who could not understand what there was to cry about.

'Here comes your little girl, Mr. Forbisher; that is Dr. Snell who is carrying her,' announced the colonel, as Pansy was brought across the gangway in the doctor's arms, greatly to her secret dissatisfaction.

Daniel Forbisher forgot his nervousness then, and walking up to the pale-faced, wide-eyed child, he said in his quavering voice—

'Don't you know me, my dear? I'm Grandpapa Forbisher—your own dear mother's father, you know.'

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There is no being sure how children will take things. Mrs. Raynor following closely behind Dr. Snell and Pansy, heard the words with dismay, thinking that Pansy would be sure to resent so much familiarity, for she was usually very exclusive in her tastes, and did not readily reciprocate friendly advances.

But Pansy held out her arms to be taken, and dropping his bag, Daniel Forbisher took her, though great girl as she was her weight made him stagger a little, he was so small and weak. Then she put her arms round his neck, holding him in a tight embrace that half strangled him.

The others moved away a little, and presently the old man sat down on a box standing near, still holding his new-found treasure in a tight clasp; neither had any thought for anyone else. To Daniel Forbisher it seemed that the intervening years had been swept away, and that he held his only daughter in his arms again. And Pansy clung to him, feeling that in him she had a part of her mother once more.

Colonel Raynor had to interrupt them after a while, for there were many arrangements to make,

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and they were beginning to excite considerable attention from the onlookers.

Daniel Forbisher appeared very much disturbed at the prospect of taking Moolah with him down into Hertfordshire; he didn't think his missus would like to have a black woman in her house, he told the colonel in a scared undertone. And at length it was decided that Moolah should go with Mrs. Raynor's family to await reshipment with their own ayah; Dr. Snell, whose destination was Peterborough, undertaking to see Pansy and Mr. Forbisher safely through their railway journey, to its termination at Hindlow Station.

They got off at last; the Raynors in three heavily-laden cabs to Paddington, on their way into Somersetshire; and Pansy, her grandfather, and Dr. Snell, in another top-heavy cab to King's Cross.

'Y-y-y-you won't f-f-f-forget me, Pansy?' stammered the doctor, as the Northern express 'slowed up' at Hindlow Junction.

'No, of course not,' returned Pansy indifferently, her whole attention absorbed by her grandpapa.

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'I-I-I-I shall b-b-be jealous, Pansy, f-f-f-for I b-b-believe that you like your grandpapa best already,' he went on, with pretended pique.

'I do,' calmly returned the child; while Daniel Forbisher murmured protestingly that she mustn't be rude to the gentleman, but his old face glowed so with delighted satisfaction as to make his reproof appear almost in the light of a commendation.

There was no time for anything further, for the train stopped, amid a wild yelling from the porters on the platform of ''Indlow Junction! 'Indlow Junction! Change 'ere for Crawford, Tettleby, an' Bridgelow.' Then Dr. Snell lifted Pansy out of the railway carriage, and carrying her through the station, put her into a cab outside. He stooped hesitatingly over her for a minute, then muttering to himself, 'Only a child,' dropped a hasty kiss on her forehead and fled, for the bell was ringing and the long train on the move as he reached his carriage and sprang in.

Mr. Forbisher had a little very mild haggling with the cabman, and then they started on the

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last stage of Pansy's long journey from Chandernagore to Bardley Green.

'Queer old stick, that old Forbisher,' remarked a gentleman to Dr. Snell, when that worthy individual was once more settled in the Northern express.

'Do you know him?' Dr. Snell asked languidly, and for once without stammering.

'Yes, a little. He is thoroughly good, though, hasn't an ounce of worldly wisdom in his whole composition, I don't believe; and his wife is like him. Their only daughter was the prettiest, most refined girl in all the countryside, and yet when she married young Vant of the Hindlow Priory family, and went with him to India, the stupid old things said that they would rather she had married a plain working man and settled down in their own village.'

'Oh, did she marry a-a-a Hindlow P-P-Priory Vant?' the doctor asked, with considerable interest.

'Yes, the second son. Of course old Sir Hugh promptly disinherited him — turned them both adrift without a shilling. Still, for all that, should anything happen to young Hugh, old Forbisher's

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daughter would in due course be Lady Vant of Hindlow Priory; and stranger things than that happen every day.'

'Ah y-y-yes! stranger things h-h-happen e-e-every day,' responded Dr. Snell.

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CHAPTER X

GRANDMAMMA FORBISHER

'For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild,
Father, unto Thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise.'

SHE was ever so many sizes bigger than Grandpapa Forbisher, a stout, comely dame, large-hearted and kind, thinking evil of none, though truth to say she very rarely was imposed upon, being possessed of a large amount of shrewd, good sense, which made her keen to detect the real from the subterfuge in any tale of distress poured into her willing and sympathetic ears.

On this June afternoon, when the Northern express was bringing home Grandpapa Forbisher

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and Pansy, the old lady found herself far too excited to settle down for her accustomed forty winks in the high-back chair by the parlour hearth.

Old Sarah, who had been Mrs. Vant's nurse, and the young girl from the workhouse, who blacked the boots and grates and ran on errands, shared also in Mrs. Forbisher's unrest. They had been hard at work since the early morning, scrubbing, rubbing, cleaning, polishing, until the old rooms and their ancient furniture were as clean as hands could make them.

The house at Bardley Green, the home of the Forbishers, was built close down by the river; it had formerly been a water-mill, and the old water-wheel still hung in the shed at the side, though it was decayed and useless—a hunting-ground for water-rats, and a favourite resort of the village boys on those rare occasions when they could elude the vigilance of Mrs. Forbisher and gain admission to the shed.

The old house was a very pleasant place in summer; most of the windows looked on to the river and the long garden, stretching down by the

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water's edge; but in winter it was of all places the most dreary and desolate.

Bardley Green was a long straggling street of cottages, winding with many a tortuous turn and twist from the park of Hindlow Priory out to the open country beyond. The old house stood down a tiny bit of lane that led from the street proper to the river, but only the dairy window and the front door opened on to the lane, for the old place stood like a pettish child, with its back to civilisation.

'What is the time, Sarah?' Mrs. Forbisher asked, for about the fourth time in half an hour, when Sarah came in to lay the table for tea.

'It isn't time for them to be here yet, ma'am, as I've been telling 'Liza. What I've had to endure from that girl this day, no one knows! Every five minutes or so she's a-asking me if I don't think it'll be lovely to have a child about the house, or wondering what she will be like. Time enough when she comes to settle that, I says. There's children, and children. Some's bideable enough, but others is worse than the rheumatics for disturbing of your peace. Miss Mary, she was

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all right—none better, but then I managed her well, and 'most everything turns on the way you manage them, I always say,' Sarah said, stoutly maintaining, as was her wont, that it was she who had in reality reared Mrs. Vant, and not her own mother, as might have been expected.

'Pansy is sure to be a nice child — dear Mary's own little girl,' put in Mrs. Forbisher tearfully, as she tried to knit, and got the leg of her stocking hopelessly muddled and her wool in a frightful snarl.

'I don't know about that, ma'am; brought up in that heathenish place with them blacks, there's no saying what she may be like. Poor Miss Mary! she's to be pitied, that she is. And to think that they might have lived in England if it hadn't been for that old'—

'Hush, Sarah! not a word of that. You know Mrs. Vant begged in her letter that nothing should ever be told the child, not even that her father's friends lived about here. If she is a sharp child, and the similarity of the name strikes her, then she may have to be told—a part. But, Sarah, do hurry; I am sure they won't be long now.'

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'Plenty of time, ma'am, and there isn't anything more to bring in now but the teapot and the poached eggs. Though I'll have to go and see what that 'Liza's about, or there's really no telling what she may do.'

'The cab's a-comin' roun' the corner!' shouted 'Liza from the kitchen; she had been standing at the dairy window, peering anxiously through the lattice-work, and so had had the first glimpse of the heavily-laden cab.

Sarah and Grandmamma Forbisher rushed to the door, though the cab had not yet turned the corner. Mrs. Forbisher was tearful still, but Sarah stood upright and grim, her lean, angular figure standing out in sharp contrast to the comfortable proportions of her mistress.

'There she is, the little dear!' squealed 'Liza from the background, where she had been ruthlessly relegated by Sarah.

Daniel Forbisher at this moment poked his head through the open cab window, and nodding cheerfully, withdrew it again.

Then with much creaking and groaning—for the lane was rough — the cab came to a standstill.

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Sarah rushed to the door to get the first sight of the child, but Mrs. Forbisher hung back a little, overpowered at the thought of seeing her only daughter's only child.

'Be careful, Sarah, be careful! She's had an accident, and can't walk!' cried Grandpapa Forbisher with tremulous eagerness. Then he gently lifted Pansy, and carried her into the square tiled hall, through a bit of dark passage-way, and up three steps into a cheerful sitting-room, from which a French window gave access to the garden.

Grandpapa Forbisher laid her on a couch near the window, and was going to draw back in order to make room for Mrs. Forbisher; but Pansy clung to him, and began to sob so pitifully that there was nothing for it but to sit down and try to comfort her.

She was tired with the fatigue and bustle of the land journey, faint and exhausted, too, from want of food; and the eager faces crowding round her had been too much for her strained nerves.

It was a new thing for Grandpapa Forbisher to feel himself a man of great importance; usually he occupied a back seat in all domestic matters,

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Mrs. Forbisher and Sarah brooking no interference in their especial departments, and both of them much given to telling him that it was useless, from every reasonable point of view, for him to meddle with things he knew nothing about. Therefore, when Pansy would suffer no one but him to take off her hat and jacket, or to give her food and drink, he felt his old heart swell with a fond, proud elation, and a sense of proprietorship that was very soothing to him.

Then Mrs. Forbisher and Sarah treated him with such a new kind of deference, and obeyed the orders he issued with respectful quickness, and all because 'Mary's child would not look at anyone else,' or suffer other hands than his to touch her.

And they were much too interested in the little stranger to be jealous of her preference for her grandpapa's tending; they could only hover near, her willing slaves to fetch and carry, in the hope that by and by she might condescend to give them a smile. While 'Liza, peeping round the doorpost—she had been peremptorily banished from the room by Sarah—fired off a series of ecstatic ejaculations of 'There now!' 'Only fancy!' 'Bless her heart!'

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'Pretty little dear!' until old Sarah, losing patience, banged the door so suddenly as to place in jeopardy the stubby tip of 'Liza's nose.

And later on, it was Grandpapa Forbisher's unaccustomed fingers which helped to clumsily unrobe poor tired Pansy and array her in her little white nightgown, while those two capable females stood in impotent idleness, for such was the caprice of their princess.

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CHAPTER XI

FIRST DAYS AT BARDLEY GREEN

'If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
. . . . . .
You can lead the little children
To the Saviour's waiting arms.'

'GRANDPAPA, there are such a lot of boys in there, and they are having such fun, what are they doing?'

'Hush! don't make a noise, or grandmamma will hear what you say,' replied Daniel Forbisher, holding up one hand warningly.

Pansy had been domesticated at Bardley Green for nearly three weeks. Her leg was so far better that she could walk about for a part of every day now, and wherever she went Grandpapa Forbisher was almost certain to be

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found too. They were in the garden in front of the house, Mr. Forbisher sitting on an old broken statue that had once been a graceful and beautiful water nymph, but was now only a battered, ugly bit of plastered stucco; while Pansy had been on a voyage of discovery to find out the cause of the noise proceeding from the wheel-shed.

'Why mustn't I make a noise for grandmamma to hear? And what are they doing in there?' demanded the young lady, uplifting a puzzled little face to scan Grandpapa Forbisher's kind old countenance.

'It's like this, you see, Pansy. The boys do love to get in with that old water-wheel; they don't hurt anything, and very often they manage to catch a few of the rats, which is a very good riddance, for we can well spare some of those gentry. But your grandmamma doesn't like having a lot of boys playing about the place, neither does Sarah; so when I find there's lads in the water-shed I frequently keep quiet and don't say anything about it,' replied Mr. Forbisher, with a rather guilty look.

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'But how do they get in? I thought the shed was kept locked?' Pansy asked.

'Well, to tell the truth, I usually make a mistake and leave it unlocked on Saturday afternoons; it's holiday for the boys, you know, and poor things, they've nowhere much but the street to play in;' and having concluded his rather lame defence, Grandpapa Forbisher executed a mild wink in admiration of his own skill in thus eluding the vigilance of Grandmamma Forbisher and Sarah.

'Then it's a secret?' asked Pansy, with kindling eyes.

'Well, yes, I suppose so—at least, I don't say anything about it.'

'Shall we go and look at the moor-hen's nest, grandpapa?' Pansy asked, with the restlessness of childhood, a few minutes later; and with unhesitating compliance Daniel Forbisher rose from his seat to accompany her.

Hand in hand they went along the winding path of the old garden, which stretched along by the riverside out towards the open country. It was a rambling, weedy, untidy old place, productive after

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a fashion, but so badly tilled and cultivated that it was a wonder that the cabbages and potatoes ever succeeded in making any headway at all among the forests of groundsel, sow-thistles, charlock, and bindweed which flourished luxuriantly on all sides, to say nothing of the groves of tall dark nettles which occupied the otherwise unoccupied corners. There were seats in abundance in every available place, but they were made of the most incongruous materials imaginable. Daniel Forbisher had once had a brother who was a coachbuilder by trade, and when at this brother's death, Daniel, as sole legatee, found himself possessed of a large amount of unsaleable stock-in-trade for which no use could be found, then it was that the old man had conceived the brilliant idea of seating his garden with some of the rubbish; in consequence of which, invalided chaise-bodies were transformed into comical-looking summer-houses, fly-drivers' seats found themselves perched nest-like in the gnarled old apple trees, or lurking under clumps of honeysuckle close by the water's edge.

Mr. Forbisher was very proud of these very

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original arrangements, and never tired of pointing out their comfort and convenience to anyone who walked through his garden. Though Sarah often remarked that 'she could not see any good in having such a pack of rubbish littering round and getting in the way, when it would be a deal more sensible to have them chopped up and burned in the kitchen fire.'

But Pansy thought they were the cunningest little seats she had ever seen; and sunning himself in the warmth of her approval, Grandpapa Forbisher cared not a scrap for any other comments whatsoever.

On the way to the moor-hen's nest the pathway wound under an archway formed from a very ancient water-wheel, the predecessor of the one still hanging in the shed by the house.

'Grandpapa, when was this wheel made, do you think?' asked Pansy, laying her hand on the slowly decaying woodwork of the arch; she had heard the story already many times, but was always wanting it retold, and Daniel Forbisher was never weary of repeating it for her benefit.

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'That wheel,' he began, clearing his throat with a little important cough, 'must be hard on eighty years old. I am seventy-seven myself, and I have heard my father say how he had the wheel made himself, and it was fixed into the mill just one year before he married my dear mother.'

'And when did it get weared out, grandpapa?' Pansy inquired, with that never-failing interest in the little recital which was so delightful to the old man.

'It got damaged in a fire that occurred just about the time your mother was born. It was taken out of the mill when the place was rebuilt from the ruins, because it was thought better to have an entirely new one than to repair this one. And see, little Pansy, it still bears traces of the fire;' and as he spoke Daniel Forbisher drew his hand half-caressingly down the rough, uneven timber, pointing to some charred marks on the weather-stained wood.

'Poor old thing! Now let us go and see the nest,' said Pansy, dragging at her grandpapa's hand; and the two sauntered on through the warm

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July sunshine, to the very end of the long garden, where it converged into a tangled, weedy swamp, which in its turn terminated in a large osier bed.

The moor-hen's nest was in the tall weeds bordering one of the numberless little pools into which the swampy ground was broken up, the river proper gliding with a stiff current a little beyond.

To-day there was a surprise for Pansy; for when, treading stealthily on tiptoe behind her grandfather, she craned her neck to peep among the tangled weeds for those seven cream-coloured eggs spotted with dark brown, she saw instead seven little balls of black fluff, and seven tiny heads with pinky, yellow beaks.

'Oh! oh!' whispered Pansy in a perfect ecstasy of delight, yet not daring to raise her voice, for fear of alarming the mother, who was probably not far off in search of food.

'May I have one?' she whispered again, after a prolonged silent survey of the treasures the nest contained.

But Daniel Forbisher drew her away. 'No,

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dear; you couldn't rear it, so your pleasure would be only pain and death to the poor little water-chick, but you shall come and see them every day when the weather is fine.'

Pansy was satisfied then, and willing to saunter back up the garden path, swinging grandpapa's hand, and talking of anything that came into her head.

'What do you expect those boys are doing now?' she asked, as they came in sight of the house and its adjoining shed.

'Gone home to their tea, I should think; they mostly go home about this time, and then I lock the shed before I go in to tea,' Daniel Forbisher answered, fondling the key in his pocket.

'Let us go and see,' pleaded Pansy; and away they went together, crossing the mill dam by a narrow bridge, turning the corner of the shed, and descending a few steps to the entrance door.

All was silent inside. The boys had departed, the great wheel hung motionless, and only a few drops of water trickled through its open

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slats and fell with little splashes into the gulf below.

Daniel Forbisher heaved a heavy sigh. 'Ah, Pansy, child! that wheel yonder was the instrument with which, when I was young, I thought to make my fortune,' he said, shaking his head a little sadly as he looked round the gloomy shed, with its silent water-wheel.

'And did you, grandpapa?'

'No, dearie, nor ever shall now; but, for all that, I've had a very happy time, and it hasn't been all wasted, either.'

'No, grandpapa,' Pansy responded. She did not understand what the old man meant, but she looked up into his face, sympathising both with the depression that had first been there, and the joy which, like a burst of sunshine, had chased it thence.

'You see, I never was smart and clever, or able to do great things in the world, but I could always drop a kind word where it was wanted, or tell the little children about Jesus Christ and heaven,' he said musingly, as though explaining to himself or Pansy the cause of the happi-

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ness of his narrow and restricted lot in life. Then he turned out of the gloomy shed towards the sunshine again, and locking the door, he and Pansy went indoors to tea.

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CHAPTER XII

A MORNING AT HINDLOW MARKET

'Toiling early in the morning,
Catching moments through the day.'

'I COULD walk, grandmamma—I'm sure I could!' Pansy cried confidently one Tuesday morning in early August, when Sarah was getting ready to start for Hindlow market, whither she went regularly every week to purchase supplies for the household.

'It is so hot, dearie, you will be worn-out before you get half-way, even,' Mrs. Forbisher said in a troubled tone, for, in common with the rest of the household, she could not bear to refuse Pansy anything she asked for.

'We could rest on the way if the child grew tired, and it isn't such a very long way,' put in Sarah.

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'Yes, let her go, wife; she's so set on it,' said Daniel Forbisher; and with the majority against her, what could grandmamma do but yield? And Pansy skipped away to get her hat.

It was quite early when they set out, only just turned eight o'clock, and the heavy dew still lay on field and hedgerow. Pansy, in her plain white frock and shady hat, walked demurely by the side of Sarah through the village street; but when the road left the houses, and wound through the beautiful park of Hindlow Priory, she skipped and danced from very frolicsomeness and delight.

'Isn't that a pretty house?' she exclaimed a minute later, when the magnificent grey front of the Priory appeared in sight at the end of a long vista of soft green sward. Tall trees clustered round it; gorgeous garden beds, in the distance looking like a carpeting of scarlet and purple and yellow, lay dotted here and there on the emerald lawn; and Pansy's exclamation drew Sarah's eyes to the fair picture.

'It's well enough' — she began rather sourly, for Sarah did not love the Priory or anything connected with it. 'But what is up, I wonder? All the blinds

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are down, and yet the sun isn't on the windows,' she said, after another look at the noble pile of buildings lying in such sweet serenity at the head of the little valley.

'Who lives there?' inquired Pansy, with childish curiosity.

'A horrid, nasty old man. I'd like a chance of telling him just what I think of him!' retorted Sarah in such a very angry tone that Pansy looked up at her in great surprise, and as a matter of course instantly propounded another question—

'What is his name?'

'My dear, that don't matter in the least—not just now, at anyrate; and see, here we are at the Willows. Now which way shall we go—keep to the road, or go up this meadow and through Morrel's Slipe into the town?' Sarah asked hurriedly, most anxious at that moment to distract the child's attention from the Priory and its inmates.

Pansy stood a moment in deliberation. The road was shady, but it was dusty too; and the other way lay up a steep green hillside, but she could see children, and chimneys at the top, and

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that decided her in favour of Morrel's Slipe, for she was a sociable little soul, and eager for contact with her fellows whenever it was possible.

Sarah made no objection, though it is probable that in her heart she would have preferred the road. And crossing the low stile, they commenced to climb the hill.

At the top there were a number of children at play, but they were ragged and dirty, and quarrelling actively, therefore had to be passed with as little notice as possible. Then came another stile, higher this time, and opening into a narrow lane or alley running between high hedges, which farther on gave place to dirty little houses, with dirtier babies swarming round the doorsteps.

'Will it all be like this?' Pansy asked, with dismay in her tone as she looked at the unclean infants and their slatternly mothers, who, with ragged gowns and hair unkempt, lounged in the doorways, their hands moving with marvellous rapidity as they manipulated long strings of straw plait.

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'No, the streets are wider and cleaner; it's these little alleys where the dirty folk seem to thrive most. I've been in a good many towns, taking one time with another, but I never came across one that beat Hindlow for dirty alleys. This one is nothing; there's some of them it would poison you to look down them; not a breath of good cleansing wind could get round them if it tried, and then folks wonder why the town isn't healthy!' commented Sarah in righteous indignation.

'I think English poor people would look better if they were black like the Hindoos; they wouldn't show when they were dirty,' remarked Pansy sagely.

'But they'd be dirty just the same—worse, most likely; and dirt is dirt, whether they're black or whether they're white,' snorted Sarah, by no means agreeing with this view of things.

'Look at those women! What a lot of plait they have!' cried Pansy a few minutes later, when they emerged on to the open street.

'Yes, you'll see plenty more like them when we get into the market,' Sarah replied, as they passed an old woman carrying a huge bundle of

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plait encircled round either arm, and a large market basket in her hands.

The market was a big square in the middle of the town, surrounded by shops and houses, with a road leading into it from each corner. This square was crowded on market mornings by the women with their plait, and stalls on which might be seen merchandise of every imaginable description, from chickens and ducks all alive and quacking, to a penny novelette, or from red herrings to ribbons.

As might be expected from such a gathering, the noise equalled the crowd. And everyone shouted according to his or her strength of lung in the vocal advertisement of the goods they had for sale.

Pansy felt dreadfully bewildered by the confusion, and clung tightly to Sarah's hand as that worthy woman struggled from stall to stall, haggling over her purchases with the keen relish only known to born bargainers. At the fish stall especially the argument became so fervid and the red-faced fishmonger so forceful in his gesticulations, that Pansy was reduced to the verge of tears, and

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dragging at Sarah's hand, begged pitifully that she would come away before the man hurt her.

'There now, you have frightened the child!' Sarah exclaimed angrily, as she stooped to comfort Pansy and to assure her that she was in no danger of violence from the noisy purveyor of fish.

'Bless 'er! there ain't no call to be frightened at me, hit's honly my way. 'Ere, my little dear, do you like peppermints? An' don't you be afraid of me; why, I've got a little gal at 'ome jest about the size of you, an' there's no one like 'er feyther, so she thinks.' As he spoke, the fiery-faced fishmonger fumbled with one fishy hand in the recesses of his blue blouse, and extracted from thence a packet of peppermint lozenges, done up in newspaper; unwrapping these, he handed them with a flourish to Pansy.

The child's face was a study! Every instinct within her warred against those unappetising sweetmeats in the outstretched fishy hand. But Pansy was a little lady, not in externals only, but in her nice appreciation of good feeling in others, and her dislike to wound the sensitiveness

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of anyone whatsoever; therefore she took one lozenge, touching it daintily with the tips of her fingers, yet never by the faintest sign betraying her reluctance.

'Take two, my dear,—take two,' entreated the fishmonger; and again Pansy had no choice but to comply.

'Well, you are a nice little lady; an' what may your name be, my dear?' he asked, as he restored the peppermint lozenges to their resting-place in his blue blouse.

'Pansy Vant,' replied our little heroine promptly.

The man's cap came off with a jerk, and he looked in amazement at Sarah, who had suddenly grown very red and uncomfortable.

'Not the captain's little daughter, sure*ly*?' he inquired, with long-drawn emphasis on the 'ly.'

'The same,' retorted Sarah, pursing up her lips and preparing to move on; but Pansy had a question to ask of the purveyor of fish.

'Do you know my father?' she inquired eagerly.

'Why, yes, missie, an' a finer young man ne'er trod shoe leather! If all had had their deserts he wouldn't ha' been'—

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But Sarah cut him short. 'Least said, soonest mended, Mr. Salter; it's time we was starting back to Bardley Green.'

'I understand, ma'am,—I understand! But it'll all come right anyhow now. I suppose you know that Mr. Hugh died last night?'

'What?' shrieked Sarah, dropping her basket unheeding to the ground.

'Yes, he is dead, poor young man! And now, of course'—

'Of course!' exclaimed Sarah, cutting the other's speech short in her agitation, and hurrying Pansy away out of the market and along the road towards Bardley Green.

'Why are you so glad because that poor Mr. Hugh is dead, and why are we hurrying so?' demanded Pansy, who was hot and out of breath.

'Because, my dear, there is too many things in this world to be glad about, to be sorry always even if one or two people do happen to die,' Sarah replied, with lamentable want of clearness.

'I should be glad too, if I could only have mother and father again,' Pansy said in a pathetic

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little voice, as she sat by Sarah's side on a green bank to rest after their quick walking.

'Ah, my dear, who knows? Maybe you'll have them here before very long,' Sarah said; but all Pansy's questioning could extract no further explanation from her.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE FUNNY LETTER

''Tis a star that shines clear through the gloom of the night.'

PANSY was very tired by the time Bardley Green was reached — almost too tired to eat any dinner, though the red-currant pudding, made from the very late red currants which grew down near to the osier bed, was nice enough to tempt the appetite of anyone, however sleepy they might be.

When dinner was over she went upstairs with Sarah to her own little room, which opened into her grandmamma's, and lying down on her little white bed, was soon in the land of forgetfulness.

It was late afternoon when she awoke; the trees were throwing long shadows across the water, and

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in the meadows the cows had gathered round the gates waiting for milking-time.

Pansy rubbed her eyes, and sat up in her bed; she had been dreaming of her old home in Chandernagore, and just for a moment she seemed to be hearing her mother's voice still speaking as she had heard it in her dream. It was not her mother, however, but Grandmamma Forbisher, who was talking to Sarah in the next room.

'It is very strange. And coming just now, too. But God's ways are not our ways, Sarah, and He can overrule everything for good. Though it does seem wicked to rejoice over that poor young man's untimely end,' said Grandmamma Forbisher in a gently regretful voice.

'Umph! Wicked or not, I don't think there was anything but joy in my heart when Mr. Salter told me, though you might have knocked me down with a feather for all that, I was that took aback,' Sarah said.

'And yet it will make no difference to our dear ones for a long time yet to come, maybe, unless Sir Hugh is softened by his sorrow,' grandmamma went on after a little silent pause.

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'He'd be sure to change if he once set eyes on that dear child; why, she's the living image of her father. I wish you'd let me take her up to the Priory, ma'am?' Sarah asked in a very uncertain tone, as though feeling pretty well sure that her request would meet denial.

'Certainly not, Sarah. If Sir Hugh wishes to be reconciled, he knows where we live, and could communicate with his son through us. Or if he did not choose to even tacitly acknowledge our claim, Captain Vant, being in the army, can always be heard of through the authorities.' Mrs. Forbisher spoke with considerable dignity, and Sarah said no more. Just then it dawned upon Pansy that she was doing wrong to lie and listen to a conversation not meant for her ears, and she remembered Mrs. Raynor's rebuke on that other occasion when she had transgressed in a similar manner; therefore she made haste to call out in quite a loud voice—

'I'm awake now, please, grandmamma and Sarah; but I didn't mean to listen—truly, I didn't, only I forgot.'

'Oh, that dear child! I had forgotten about

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her,' exclaimed Mrs. Forbisher, quite in consternation. But Sarah came into Pansy's room and asked her if she felt rested, and was nearly ready for tea.

'Why, yes, thank you; and is it tea-time?' Pansy asked, springing off her bed and coming bounce on the floor.

'Yes, it is past tea-time really, only the master said that as you were not awake he was in no hurry, so you must make haste down. There, let me just wash your face and brush your hair, and you will do fine,' Sarah said, performing Pansy's toilet with her kind, deft old fingers in such a rapid fashion that Pansy was downstairs and at the tea-table almost as soon as Grandmamma Forbisher.

But before she could begin on her bread and butter there was something Pansy wanted to get off her mind, and directly Grandpapa Forbisher had said 'Amen' to the blessing, she began—

'Please, grandmamma, I am so dreadful sorry I listened; but I did quite forget, though Mrs. Raynor told me it was very wrong to listen

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when other people were talking and didn't think you could hear. Will you forgive me, please?'

'Of course I will, dear. It wasn't right to listen, but it is very good of you to come and tell me about it. Now, get your tea, and then I've got something nice for you,' said the old lady, beaming on Pansy, though her eyes were tearful — the moisture evoked by Pansy's plea for forgiveness for her fault.

'What is it, grandmamma? Something to eat?' Pansy asked, with a quick look round the well-spread tea-table, and thinking in that case she must limit her meal in order to the more fully enjoy the good in store for her.

'No, it is not anything to eat, so you had better make a good tea,' grandmamma said, shaking her head with a delightful air of mystery.

'Oh dear! I wonder what it can be?' said Pansy, falling to upon her bread and butter vigorously. 'It can't be a letter from mother, because I had that last week. Oh, grandmamma, do tell me! I'm getting impatienter every minute,' urged the little girl imploringly.

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'Don't you suppose that any one can write a letter to you except your mother?' inquired grandpapa, who had been silent hitherto.

'Oh, it is a letter, then, and it came by the afternoon post, I know!' Pansy exclaimed delightedly.

'Yes, it is a letter,' echoed grandmamma; and then, being too kind to keep Pansy in suspense any longer, she got up from the tea-table, and going to a little old-fashioned cabinet standing in one corner of the room, brought from thence a letter directed to Pansy in a big round handwriting, and adorned with sundry and divers blots and smudges.

Pansy took it with an air of importance, and turned it over and over before she opened it, treating every part to a minute inspection, especially the stamp, which was stuck on the wrong way up.

'It's a very funny letter, I think,' Pansy said, handing it to grandmamma, but without opening it.

'Am I to open it and read it?' Mrs. Forbisher asked, beginning to hunt for her spectacles.

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'Yes, please, grandmamma,' returned Pansy, both cheeks getting very red with excitement as she watched the envelope broken open.

Oh, the treasures contained in that envelope! First of all came out a paper monkey, highly coloured, and furnished with a string which on being pulled caused the monkey's limbs to gyrate furiously; the sight of this marvel sent Pansy dancing with mingled terror and delight; and then she waited eagerly for the next paper to be drawn forth.

'I can't get it out,' grandmamma said, as she tugged at the paper; but a little harder pull than the rest and out it flew, several papers folded into one, and last of all, a little note doubled many times and poked in one corner.

Among the folded papers there was a sheet full of cats' heads, some wearing hats, some caps and spectacles like Grandmamma Forbisher and Sarah; some were dear funny little kits, with the loveliest of feline smiles on their furry countenances. Then came a sheet of corresponding dog portraits, from the roley-poley pug puppy to the grave old mastiff attired in a top hat; a sheet

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of butterflies; and then a bit of cardboard wrapped up in soft white tissue paper.

Pansy unfolded this with trembling fingers, she couldn't imagine what could be inside.

'It is Elsie—Elsie her very own self!' she cried, running to Grandpapa Forbisher and thrusting the portrait into his hand, that he might observe how like to the original it was. Elsie, bland and smiling, arrayed in immaculate frock and sash, and carrying Nettles in her arms, who also was got up for the occasion.

For quite a long time Pansy could look at nothing else, until at length she was reminded of the little folded note, whereupon grandmamma and her spectacles were brought into active service. The note was very brief, and ran thus—

'DEAR PANSY,—Elsie can't write, so I have to do it for her. She hopes your leg is better, and that you haven't been drowned in the river yet. We've got a pony, two dogs, and six rabbits; and the girls have some cats and a governess.—I am, dear Pansy, yours respectfully,

'LIONEL CARSFIELD RAYNOR.'

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'Oh dear! I think that is the very funniest letter I ever saw,' exclaimed Pansy.

'And I think so too,' laughed grandmamma, as she took off her spectacles.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE BLACKBERRYING EXCURSION

'Kept by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die.'

PANSY had a very happy time that summer. She missed her mother very much, it is true, but she was too fully occupied to have time to pine really. If she became quiet, or looked a little dull, grandmamma was sure to have something on hand which Pansy must help her to do; or else grandpapa wanted her in the garden; or 'Liza was sent to hunt for a hen's nest, and Pansy must go too, because her eyes were so sharp at finding the eggs among the tall nettles of the hedgerows or in the hay-mow.

Sometimes, it is true, the world did not look very bright to the little maiden, but that was

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chiefly when she felt sleepy in the mornings, and was aroused from pleasant slumber to find Sarah and the bath awaiting her; or when the rain beating dismally against the windows kept her a prisoner when she wanted to be out in the fields. At such times Pansy was apt to pout, and to wear an ugly scowl on her face, that made grandmamma look sad, and caused the cat to retire under the kitchen dresser to be out of the little girl's way.

There had been a whole week of wet weather in the early part of September, and Pansy had been cross every day—so cross that the cat, not thinking the dresser sufficiently safe as a retreat, had decided on retiring to the barn and the haymow until such time as Pansy and the weather should improve.

But at the end of the week Pansy awoke one morning to find the sun shining brightly, and a fine drying wind rushing through the yellowing trees, bringing down hundreds of leaves every minute, but shrinking the mud puddles as well, and making the world out of doors fit for Pansy to run about and enjoy.

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There was no grumbling about Sarah and the bath on this morning, but Pansy was out of bed and into the water in a most surprisingly quick time, and she did not fidget while Sarah buttoned and tied and worked her way through the tedious mysteries of a little girl's toilet. Then when her hair had been brushed, and kneeling down by her little white bed she had prayed her morning prayer, Pansy ran downstairs smiling so broadly that the cat got up from her comfortable seat on the doorstep and came forward to purr round her legs, and to proclaim loudly in cat language that fine weather was better than wet.

'Silas Bream came past half an hour ago; he says there are such large quantities of blackberries on the Lodon Road, could you spare 'Liza to take Pansy blackberrying this afternoon?' Grandpapa Forbisher said, addressing Grandmamma Forbisher, who immediately said that it was the very thing she had been thinking of herself, and 'Liza should be hurried through her morning's work, dinner should be put forward half an hour, and the two should have a good long afternoon in the lanes that opened into the Lodon Road.

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Oh, how happy Pansy was on that bright September morning! As soon as the wind had dried the worst of the dampness from the garden paths, she went with Grandpapa Forbisher to pick up the apples that had blown from the trees at the end of the garden. They got quite a large basketful; and some of the plums that grew on a tree by the house had blown down too, so they picked them up also, and then Pansy went indoors to rest until dinner-time and look over Bloom's wardrobe a little. It was very pleasant sitting in the deep low seat of the kitchen window, with Bloom and the cat perched up beside her, and a nice smell of cooking from the fireplace, where a damson pudding was bobbing up and down in the saucepan, and a joint of mutton was getting brown and savoury in the oven.

But it was pleasanter still when dinner was over and Pansy was out in the sunshine again. 'Liza carried a big basket, and she carried a small one, and they walked along at a good round pace, for they were very anxious to get to work on the blackberries.

Silas Bream was quite correct in his statement

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concerning the luxuriant crop of blackberries on the Lodon Road. They hung in thickly-weighted clusters on every bramble bush, long trails strayed down through the hazel boughs, and even among the clumps of elder the twining blackberry bushes had found a resting-place.

The baskets were tumbled down on to the grass for a while, until Pansy and 'Liza had eaten their fill of the delicious hedgeside fruit, and then when they could eat no more the fun began. Of course Pansy pricked her fingers, scratched her face, and tore her frock; but such small disasters mattered little viewed side by side with the pleasure of scrambling after the blackberries and swinging up into the hedges by the aid of the hazel boughs, which now and then gave way, letting them down with a crash on to the soft grass below.

But after a while the baskets grew heavy, and Pansy became tired, 'Liza also was not so eager in pursuit of fruit, and quite worn-out with their exertions, they sat down on the step of a stile to get rested.

'Why, that is where Mrs. Bream lives, in that

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cottage over yonder,' exclaimed 'Liza, pointing to a thatched roof just across the meadow. 'Shall we just run across and see her, Miss Pansy? She's a main kind-hearted old body is Mrs. Bream.'

'You can go if you like, but I'm tired, and shall stay here,' Pansy answered dreamily, her fatigue and the warm September sunshine combining to render her half asleep.

'Very well; I'll just run across and ask her how she does, for Silas said this morning that she wasn't just the thing. You stay here; I shan't be five minutes,' 'Liza said, getting up from her seat and mounting the stile.

But ten minutes and more had passed away, and Pansy, leaning against the stile, was having a very comfortable nap indeed, when a deep voice close to her roused her with a start from her slumber to a very wide-awake condition.

'Little girl, I want to get over the stile.'

It was an old gentleman dressed in black, accompanied by a large retriever dog also black, who had accosted Pansy, and he spoke

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irritably, as though annoyed at having his way blocked.

Pansy sat up and rubbed her eyes, not so much from sleepiness as from the idea that she had seen the gentleman before, and ought to know him again.

'You should say "please"; it isn't good manners to speak to ladies like that!' she retorted with some spirit, not in the least afraid of him or his dog either.

'Oh, indeed? And to whom have I the pleasure of speaking, pray? Are you a royal princess, or a daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, may I ask?' the old gentleman inquired sarcastically, though there was a very amused smile curling round the corners of his stern, well-shaped mouth as he propounded his questions.

'No, I am not a real princess, though grandpapa often calls me princess; and I don't think I'm related to the Archbishop of Canterbury. My name is Pansy Vant, and I live in the old house by the water,' Pansy replied, with all the dignity she could muster, as she arose from her seat on

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the bar of the stile and stood aside to let the old gentleman pass.

But now he seemed in no hurry to go, but stood looking very intently at the little girl, who returned his gaze with perfect fearlessness, and a large amount of curiosity also.

'What did you say your name was, little girl?' The old gentleman's voice trembled a little as he asked; but Pansy did not notice that, she was thinking what nice eyes he had, just like her father's.

'My name is Pansy Vant,' she said, enunciating each word with great distinctness, thinking that he could not have understood her before.

'Where do your father and mother live, child?' he asked, his voice harsh and grating now by reason of his overmastering anxiety, though Pansy thought that perhaps he was, for some cause unknown, angry with her.

'I don't know where they are living now, not until my next letter comes. We used to live at Chandernagore, which is a very nice place, with gardens and fountains, and dear little cunning sparrows. But some of Queen Victoria's

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subjects up country were so tiresome and quarrelled so badly, that Queen Victoria sent father to help keep them in order; and mother went with him. But they sent me home to England, because it wasn't a nice place for little girls to go to.'

Pansy got through her long speech bravely, but she could not help her lips quivering as she spoke of the dear father and mother who were so widely separated from her.

'Very well told, little girl,—very well told indeed, and does credit to your upbringing. What sort of a woman is your mother, I wonder?' The last words were spoken musingly, almost as though the old gentleman was indulging in a soliloquy.

'My mother is a lady!' retorted Pansy, with extreme emphasis and flashing eyes; for though unable by reason of her youth to understand all the old gentleman's tone implied, she was yet conscious that in some to her inscrutable manner her mother's title to real ladyhood had been doubted.

'Yes, I begin to think she must be, judging

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from you, though as far as looks go you are just your father over again, and you have his temper too, that's pretty evident,' the old gentleman said, smiling now and for the second time during their interview.

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CHAPTER XV

A MULTIPLYING OF RELATIONS

'Yet these a child may bring.'

'DO you know my father too?' Pansy asked, in unbounded astonishment.

'Who else knows him?' asked the old gentleman.

'It was ever so long ago, when I went to Hindlow plait market with Sarah, there was a very dirty fish man—only he was kind too, and gave me some peppermint lozenges, and I threw them away when he wasn't looking, because they smelt so fishy—he knew my father, he said there never was a finer young man, and then he said something about deserts, only Sarah stopped him so as he shouldn't say any more,' replied Pansy, who had carefully treasured the fishmonger Salter's words,

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though she had not, of course, the faintest idea to what they had reference.

'Ay, ay, it's the old story everywhere; they all cry the same thing, turn where I will,' the old gentleman said so sadly that Pansy began to feel quite sorry for him. Then he came a little closer, and putting his hand under her chin, lifted her face a little and looked very intently at it.

But Pansy never permitted strangers to take liberties with her, and drawing back, she said proudly—

'Leave me alone, if you please, and you can get over the stile now.'

The old gentleman laughed a little at this, but he looked very pleased, and then he asked, 'And how comes it that you are sitting out here alone, so far from the old house by the water?'

'I am waiting for 'Liza, who went across to that cottage to see Mrs. Bream. And here she comes back again,' Pansy said, indicating 'Liza, who now appeared coming over the meadow at full speed.

'She ought not to have left you here alone,' the old gentleman said, drawing his eyebrows together in a heavy frown.

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'It didn't hurt. God can take care of me without 'Liza,' Pansy retorted stoutly, by no means inclined to endure criticism from any outsider on anything pertaining to her own individual affairs.

'Does your mistress know that you are not to be trusted out with this young lady?' he inquired of 'Liza, who appeared on the scene at this moment, very red, very hot, and very much out of breath.

'Liza dropped a very deep curtsey, and said stammeringly—

'If—if you please, sir, I was only gone a minute, and Miss Pansy said she was too tired to come with me.'

'Then you should have stayed with her. I shall make it my business to let Mrs. Forbisher know that you are not a trustworthy attendant. You can go on home now, and I will follow with the young lady,' the old gentleman said. And 'Liza, bursting into a loud howl of weeping, picked up the baskets and hurried along the road in the direction of the old house by the water.

'Aren't you going over the stile?' Pansy asked,

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as he took her hand and they turned along the road in the direction taken by the weeping 'Liza.

'Not now; I am going with you instead. I want you to tell me something about your father; I used to know him when he was a boy.'

'Did you? How funny it seems to think of father ever having been a boy! Why, he is such a splendid big man, and lovely to look at,' replied Pansy.

'Is he? I suppose you love him very much, don't you?'

'Yes, very, very much—almost as well as mother, I think.'

'Not better than your mother?'

'Well, I don't know, it is so difficult to decide. When I was at home in Chandernagore I loved father best, but since I've been away I've wanted mother most badly. But, if you please, what is your name, and where do you live? I forgot that I hadn't asked you.'

'My name is—well, I don't think it matters much what my name is, but I live in that big house called Hindlow Priory,' the old gentleman said,

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eyeing Pansy very intently the while, to see what effect this news would have upon her.

She looked up suddenly with a gleam of fun in her blue eyes, and said demurely, 'Sarah said that a very disagreeable old man named Sir Hugh lived there—did she mean you, do you expect?'

'Most probably, and I'm bound to say I can act the character pretty well.'

'Then you are Sir Hugh?'

'Yes.'

'Sir Hugh—what?'

'Sir Hugh Vant. Have you not heard my name before, little one?'

'Why, that is my name too!' Pansy exclaimed, ignoring the question.

'Exactly; and, if I mistake not, you are my little granddaughter, Pansy Vant,' he said kindly, drawn on to this admission in spite of himself, so great was the force of his liking for the little girl. But Pansy looked dubious, and after a moment of hesitation withdrew her hand from his. They were almost close to the turning down to the old house now, and she was not at all afraid of this stranger

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gentleman, who was claiming acquaintance in so summary a manner.

'I don't think I can be your granddaughter, or someone would have told me about it,' she said, strong doubts as to the correctness of his statement dominating her tone.

'Didn't your father ever tell you that you had another grandpapa besides old — besides Mr. Forbisher?' Sir Hugh asked, a very disagreeable frown settling on his brows, which Pansy's next words did not tend to dissipate.

'Oh no; when I used to ask him if he didn't never have a father and mother like other people, he used to say that mother's father and mother had to be enough for him.'

There was no time for Sir Hugh to reply to this, even had he wished to do so, for they had reached the house door, where Grandmamma Forbisher stood on the step looking very grave indeed.

'Pansy dear, I hope you have not worried Sir Hugh with your chatter?' the old lady asked apprehensively, for the portentous character of the frown on the baronet's face had not escaped her shrewd observation.

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'No, Mrs. Forbisher, no; I have only had a few candid statements from the young lady, who also refuses to credit my statement concerning the relationship between us,' Sir Hugh replied, gravely enough it is true, yet with nothing of the thunder-cloud in his speech.

'My daughter bade us keep the child as quiet as possible, Sir Hugh. Neither she nor her husband wished you to be annoyed by having unacknowledged relations hanging round, and as some sort of consideration was due to us also, we were requested not to mention your existence to the child. But you had better come in, sir; matters of this kind get no benefit by being aired in public;' and as she spoke Grandmamma Forbisher led the way through the hall, along the dark little passage, and up the steps to the sitting-room, proud, aristocratic Sir Hugh Vant following meekly behind, led by Pansy, who was dreadfully puzzled to know how she should manage with two grand-papas, when she had thought the number limited to one.

Tea was ready laid in the sitting-room, the teapot tucked away under the cosy, the copper

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kettle bubbling away on the fire. This being so, Grandmamma Forbisher looked at her visitor, hesitated a moment, then her hospitality gaining the mastery over her hesitation, she begged Sir Hugh to partake of a cup of tea.

A very haughty refusal trembled on the old gentleman's tongue, but Pansy's soft hand was holding his, and in the puzzled child-eyes scanning his countenance with such wistful intentness he could see plainly a strong likeness to his banished yet longed-for son. Therefore the refusal was never spoken, but instead, the old man found himself drinking tea and chatting away to Pansy, who began to think that a multiplying of relations might not be such a bad thing after all.

Presently Grandpapa Forbisher came in, and Pansy immediately left her place by the side of Sir Hugh to go and hand her other grandpapa his cup of tea, to carry him the cake, and by such numberless little attentions show which of the two old gentlemen held the highest place in her esteem.

'Might I—would you allow me to have the child?' the proud old baronet asked, with a

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strange new meekness 'Both Lady Vant and myself are very lonely since our bereavement.'

Grandpapa Forbisher looked up in alarm, while Grandmamma Forbisher opened her lips to speak, but in reality it was Pansy herself who answered the question, and that in a rather summary fashion too. Casting herself on Grandpapa Forbisher, she clung to him, sobbing and crying, and imploring not to be taken away, in so piteous a fashion that dear kind-hearted old Daniel Forbisher felt his own tears begin to rise in sympathy, though Grandmamma Forbisher looked scandalised, and Sir Hugh Vant just a wee trifle disgusted.

'There, there! grandpapa's princess mustn't cry. No one shall take her away, only she really must be a good girl,' murmured the old man soothingly, as he pulled out his handkerchief and commenced to mop her tears up.

Thus reassured, Pansy recovered her equanimity forthwith, and marching up to Sir Hugh, who had risen to take his departure, she said—

'Will you please forgive me, Grandpapa Vant, for not wanting to go with you, but I must be Grandpapa Forbisher's little girl until father and

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mother come home, please? Only I'll come and see you sometimes, if you like.'

Sir Hugh's rather grim countenance relaxed at this speech, and he shortly after took his leave, having arranged that Sarah should take Pansy to the Priory on the day following, in order to make the acquaintance of Lady Vant, who was an invalid and never able to leave her rooms.

Pansy was very sober-faced that evening, and when Grandmamma Forbisher asked her if she did not feel well, she replied, with a sigh—

'Yes, thank you, grandmamma; I was only thinking what a dreadful long time it will take to say my prayers now I've got such a lot of relations to pray for.'

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CHAPTER XVI

GRANDMAMMA VANT

'The noble of birth and the poor of the earth.'

THE next day was sunshiny and bright as the previous one had been, and after an early dinner, Pansy was washed and brushed, and smartened up to such an extent that the result was fairly startling, so exceedingly neat and trim did she look, as in a spotless white frock and with her best hat on her head she set out to walk with Sarah to the Priory.

'Good-bye, grandmamma. I'll be sure to behave properly, and I won't say "happle pie," like 'Liza does,' called out Pansy in starting, she having fallen into disgrace that morning on account of her abuse of the Queen's English and her too faithful imitation of 'Liza's peculiar phraseology.

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'I wonder what it will be like, Sarah? Will they have black servants and a punkah, do you expect?' Pansy inquired, as they came in sight of the Priory standing at the end of the park.

'Dear bless the child, no! They don't have black servants in England—not in these parts leastways, though I've heard my sister's husband's brother tell of a place he knowed about in Southampton or Portsmouth, or somewhere that way, where they had a black cook. And as for a punker, why, there's draughts enough in them Priory passages to turn a couple of windmills, I should say, without their having any special contrivances to keep the air moving.'

'Oh, I didn't know,' replied Pansy in a tone of disappointment, her thoughts having reverted to the familiar surroundings of her old home in Chandernagore.

'But there will be lots of grand things, the like of which you have never seen before,' Sarah went on, with intent to cover Pansy's disappointment for her.

'Oh, I feel quite frightened!' whispered Pansy, hanging very tightly to Sarah's hand as they made

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their way along the carriage-drive to the grand front entrance.

As Sarah made no reply to this observation, it is only fair to suppose that she also was feeling a little embarrassed by the position in which she found herself.

A very tall footman, dressed in a dark chocolate livery, swung back the great hall door in response to Sarah's ring. He stared at them in surprise for a moment, and then he said rudely—

'This is the visitors' hentrance; there is a side door for hother folks.'

'And as we happen not to be "other folks," but visitors, perhaps you'll kindly let us in this way, young man, without any more palaver? We know our place and keep in it, which is more than can be said of you.' So saying, Sarah calmly elbowed the discomfited footman to one side, and led Pansy into the hall.

Pansy opened her blue eyes to their very widest extent as she gazed on the splendours all around her. The floor at her feet was of polished black marble, with here and there brilliant-hued rugs and skins of animals spread about. The roof was

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arched like a church, the arches resting on slender marble pillars. One big window at the farther end was of stained glass, through which the light fell softly. Big lounges covered with crimson plush stood round the sides, and from the walls many a head of antlered deer, badger, and fox stared at Pansy with fixed glassy eyes.

'Go tell Sir Hugh and Lady Vant that Miss Pansy Vant has come, and is awaiting their pleasure,' commanded Sarah, who had lain awake on the previous night to compose that little speech, and was mightily pleased with the result of her endeavour.

The man regarded Pansy in blank amazement for one brief moment, and then, with an indistinct murmur of apology, disappeared, leaving Sarah and Pansy alone in the hall.

'What dreadfully good people Grandpapa and Grandmamma Vant must be!' said Pansy in a loud whisper.

'Umph! I don't suppose they are better than other folks,' replied Sarah in a tone which hinted rather broadly that perhaps they were not so good.

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'But they live in a church.'

'"The nearer the church the farther from God," as the old saying goes,' commented Sarah grimly, and then proceeded to explain to the little girl that a Priory was a house and not a church, though it might resemble one.

'Will you step this way, if you please, miss? Her ladyship is in the library,' announced the footman, addressing himself with a low bow to Pansy, and ignoring Sarah entirely—an omission, however, of which that worthy woman appeared wholly unconscious as she stalked after him, still holding Pansy by the hand.

The library was a long, lofty room stretching one whole side of the building; it had, like the hall, an arched roof supported by marble columns, but a heavy carpet covered the floor, and instead of stained glass in the windows shutting away the world outside, there were lovely peeps of field and woodland through the mullioned casements, and at one end glass doors gave entrance to a perfect paradise of flowers.

Pansy did not see all this at first. What she did see was a lady lying on a couch, wrapped in costly

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shawls, and surveying the little girl as she approached, through a pair of gold-framed eye-glasses.

'Well, little girl, and so your name is Pansy Vant?' she said in a clear, high-pitched tone, scanning Pansy the while.

'Yes, please, Grandmamma Vant,' replied Pansy, mindful of her manners.

'My dear child, don't call me that,' protested the lady, with a shrug of horror.

'What shall I say, if you please?' asked Pansy, decidedly taken aback by this reception.

'Grandmamma, or, if you prefer it, grannie, but Grandmamma Vant — horrors, no!' Lady Vant replied with more energy than so delicate a lady might have been expected to display.

'I think I will say grannie, then, if you please, or I shall get you so mixed up with Grandmamma Forbisher,' returned Pansy, and wondered in her innocent little heart why the lady shuddered again.

'Yes, that will do nicely; and now you may kiss me. Gently, if you please, because I am not strong.' Lady Vant lifted a warning hand as she spoke, for Pansy was advancing upon her prepared

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for a vigorous embrace, which, however, had to be softened down to one calm peck at the new grannie's lips, which by no means coincided with Pansy's ideas of a loving greeting.

Afterwards Sarah was sent away to the housekeeper's room; and Pansy, seated demurely by her grannie's couch on a big velvet footstool, was put through a pretty severe cross-examination concerning her home in Chandernagore, her mother, her father, and lastly, regarding her residence with Mr. and Mrs. Forbisher in the old house by the water.

'It's lovely living there—at least it would be if only I had father and mother, you know. For grandmamma makes such lovely apple pies and things; and there are no mosquitoes, only the cat and a few flies; and Sarah takes care of me, just like Moolah used to do—only, of course, she is nicer, because you don't have to keep trying to make her a Christian.'

'And did you try to make Moolah a Christian?'

'Oh yes; but it makes a dreadful lot of work, you know. The outside part is easy enough, teaching her to say her prayers and to carry a prayer-book

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to church; it is the inside part that is so difficult, making her leave off telling fibs and keeping her from stealing things,' Pansy said, with a sigh of relief that her missionary enterprise as regarded Moolah was at an end.

'You are a very strange child,' Lady Vant said, withdrawing her handkerchief from her face, which she had been using as a screen to hide her laughter.

'Am I?' Pansy asked, a sudden mist filling the blue eyes, for she thought Lady Vant was making fun of her.

'Yes, indeed you are; and I am very glad. I would not have you like a common child for worlds. Can you do anything yet, Pansy—play the piano, or recite?' Lady Vant inquired, her thoughts being chiefly occupied with the show part of education.

'Elsie and I used to sing hymns coming over to England, but I can't do anything else,' Pansy replied, wondering if she ought to tell Lady Vant that she was taking lessons on the jew's-harp under the able tuition of 'Liza; but as she had not yet attained to competency in this delightful study

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she deemed it safer to avoid mentioning it, for fear Lady Vant might wish to hear her perform.

'Do you keep a cat, grannie?' she asked, after a silence which made her feel fidgety.

'I suppose so, though I do not see them. There are dogs, though, and when Sir Hugh comes in he will take you to see them.'

'Do you never go out?' Pansy asked, a great deal of awe and pity in her tone; to her it seemed such a terrible thing to be a prisoner from the fresh air and the sunshine, and the thousand sights and sounds of the outside world, which made life such an enjoyable thing.

'No, I never go; I have not been outside of these walls for five years, little Pansy,' the lady answered in a voice that quivered, in spite of herself, with a strong pain of self-pity.

'Oh, you poor, poor, dear grannie!' exclaimed the impulsive child, springing up from her stool and bestowing a very hearty though uninvited caress upon the invalid, and which met a better reception than might have been hoped for, seeing that she neither winced under it nor repulsed Pansy by the slightest word or gesture even.

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Sir Hugh entering at this moment was decidedly astonished to find Pansy leaning over the couch and hugging Lady Vant in a manner in which her own children would never have dreamed of indulging. But then Pansy was apt to do what came into her head, or her heart, and that without much ceremony or invitation.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE SPLENDOURS OF THE PRIORY

'Oh may I bear some humble part
In that immortal song!'

SO you are good friends already?' Sir Hugh said, as he advanced across the room to his wife's couch.

'Oh, Hugh, she will be charming when she is polished!' Lady Vant exclaimed quite eagerly, a thin streak of colour in her pale cheeks testifying to her excitement.

'Shall I shine then?' asked Pansy in all simplicity, and wondering mightily what the operation would be like.

Sir Hugh burst into an exceedingly hearty laugh, but Lady Vant looked puzzled.

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What do you mean, child?' she asked, a little sharply.

'You said I would be charming when I was polished, and I thought they polished things on purpose to make them shine,' Pansy replied, her thoughts reverting to Sarah's daily toil with the kitchen grate, and 'Liza's less careful manipulation of her grandpapa's boots.

'Quite right, little one, quite right; and you will have to be polished to make you shine, and shine you shall too, the belle of the country-side,' Sir Hugh said, patting his little granddaughter very tenderly on the head.

'"They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever,"' quoted Pansy, with reverently folded hands.

Sir Hugh and Lady Vant looked at each other in surprise and consternation, being by no means used to having Scripture quoted in their presence with such unmistakable directness.

'Would you like to see the grounds, Pansy?' Sir Hugh asked a few minutes later, thinking that Lady Vant might be tired, for she was lying back

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on her cushions with closed eyes and pale, weary face.

Pansy was only too glad to have a change; the heavy grandeur of the house oppressed her, but out in the gardens she became her bright, cheery self once more.

'This is a pretty garden, but I don't like your house as well as Grandpapa Forbisher's,' Pansy said, skipping along in the sunshine over the smooth-shaven lawn.

'I am very sorry for that. What is it that you object to?' Sir Hugh inquired, with hardly maintained gravity.

'It is so big, and so dreadfully grand, and the chairs and sofas are too splendid to be sat upon; and I don't like the man that opens the door, he isn't nearly so polite as that fishmonger that gave me the peppermint lozenges at Hindlow market—those I couldn't eat, you know,' Pansy replied.

'And so you would not like to change your mind, and leave Grandpapa Forbisher and come here to live?' Sir Hugh asked, with a desire to hear what she would say.

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'No, thank you; I should be afraid of spoiling the furniture, I am so very careless sometimes. I spilt a cup of tea all over the sitting-room couch one day last week. It didn't spoil it, because the cover would wash; but your covers won't wash, will they, grandpapa?'

'I am afraid not,' Sir Hugh answered, a pang of regret coming to him, for the first time in his life, because his surroundings were too great and too grand for the happier home-life of less highly placed people.

'Never mind, though; they are very nice to look at,' Pansy retorted, with intent to console and then they went off to look at the swans in the Priory pond, which was almost big enough to be called a lake.

'Why, there is a moor-hen, and it is just like one of ours!' Pansy exclaimed, when the swans had been looked at and fed.

'Yes, probably it is one from the old mill; the stream that feeds this pond is the one that passes your other grandpapa's house, you know.'

'So it is, but I didn't think that such a

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small stream of water could have filled this big pond.'

'Ah, that shows you what littles can do; it was little stones that built my big house, and it is little acorns that grow into big oak trees,' moralised Sir Hugh, under the impression that he was helping Pansy's education forward by this sort of talk.

'Oh yes, I know all that,' cried the child, thinking he was quoting, and anxious to show that she could quote also. 'There is a hymn all about it; it goes like this—

"Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean,
And the beauteous land.

And the little minutes,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity."

That is rather a nice hymn, isn't it, Grandpapa Vant?'

'Very. Do you learn many hymns?'

'No, only on wet Sundays when I can't go to church, and I have to do something to keep me

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out of mischief; other days I learn out of Nature.'

'Out of what?' asked Sir Hugh, looking puzzled.

'Out of Nature—about bees, and birds, and butterflies, and such things, you know. It is very interesting—much better than books; it is like being at play all the time. Mother said I was not to go to school or have book lessons until she and father came to England, so I do this instead.'

'Who teaches you? or are you your own instructor?' Sir Hugh inquired.

'Grandpapa Forbisher teaches me most, but Sarah tells me a good deal, and even 'Liza knows ever so many things that are useful. Grandmamma says that you can pick up a very good education if you will but keep your eyes open as you go through life.'

'So it seems. But don't you think you would like to have your tea soon?' Sir Hugh asked, feeling that this small maiden was almost too much for him from a conversational point of view.

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'Is it your tea-time? Oh, I am glad, for I am dreadfully hungry, only I didn't like to tell you so, because it would have been rude,' Pansy said gleefully.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE HEART OR THE HEAD

'Thy word I in my heart have hid.'

THE sunny September days passed rapidly away, and October came in, with cold nights and mornings, and furious storms that blew down the late apples from the trees and lashed the river into fury. Pansy could not play in the garden very much now. Sometimes when the weather was fine for a little time she would race down the garden paths, or clamber up into some of the odd little seats, but 'Liza was sure to be sent to bring her in out of the dampness, and her outdoor exercise had gradually to be curtailed to an orderly walk with Sarah or Grandpapa Forbisher along the Lodon Road or into Hindlow town.

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One weekly treat she had, which, as the days grew darker and shorter, she came to value more and more. Every Wednesday morning, directly after breakfast, the Priory carriage, with its high-stepping horses, and the grey-haired old coachman and a tall footman, came rolling down the little lane, and Pansy was handed into the carriage with as much deference as though she was a real grown-up lady. Then there was a long day at the Priory, and at Pansy's bedtime the carriage was ordered out again, and she came home with as much state as attended her morning journey.

Part of the day—the part she liked least—had to be spent sitting very quietly by the couch of Lady Vant, either in the library or in her dressing-room, which was a very large, pleasant room upstairs.

One cold, wet Wednesday at the beginning of November, when Pansy arrived at the Priory she was not taken as usual straight to Lady Vant; but Sir Hugh, who met her at the great front entrance with a very grave look on his face, led her instead into the housekeeper's room.

'Grannie is not well this morning, Pansy; I do

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not think that you will be able to see her to-day,' he said, as he began to pull off her gloves before the fire.

'Is she very bad?' Pansy asked, with plenty of sympathy in her heart, yet uncomfortably conscious all the time that she was rather glad that her usual penance of sitting quietly in Lady Vant's room would not have to be undergone that day.

'I am afraid so,' Sir Hugh replied; and then he went quickly away, and Pansy was left with Mrs. Brown, the Priory housekeeper.

'Is grannie going to die, Mrs. Brown?' she asked, when her things had been taken off, and she was getting nicely warmed by the fire.

'We hope not, Miss Pansy, but the poor lady is very ill,' Mrs. Brown said; and then she had to bustle away to see after something that had to be done for Lady Vant.

Pansy was left a good deal to her own devices that day, and she wandered through the large handsome rooms, looking at the pictures, and amusing herself as best she could.

There was a portrait of her father, painted when

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he was a little boy, that interested her more than anything else; he was sitting on a stile, while his brother Hugh, who had so lately died, stood beside him. The likeness between the brothers was very strong, and Pansy spent a considerable time in wondering whether her Uncle Hugh had been as good and kind as her own father.

'Miss Pansy, her ladyship is a little better now, and wants you to go and sit with her for a little while.' It was Mrs. Brown who spoke, and she had come in search of Pansy just as the November twilight was settling down, dark and cheerless, on the world outside, and sending hosts of heavy shadows to haunt the wide rooms and dusky recesses of the dim old Priory.

'Is grannie alone?' Pansy asked a little timidly, for, like other children, the thought of anyone very ill frightened her.

'No; Polkingham is with her. But you must be very quiet, Miss Pansy, and not talk very much,' adjured Mrs. Brown, as Pansy crept after her to Lady Vant's room.

Polkingham was Lady Vant's maid—a staid, elderly person of whom Pansy was very fond.

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She was sitting in a chair near the bed, but she rose when the little girl entered the room.

'Come here, Miss Pansy; my lady will like to have you close to her,' she said, putting Pansy into the chair she had just quitted.

'Grannie is very ill, dearie,' said Lady Vant's thin, high-pitched voice from the bed.

'I'm so sorry, grannie dear,' murmured Pansy in a troubled tone; and her sorrow was very real too, for she had forgotten all those tedious hours in the library and the dressing-room, and thought only of Lady Vant's present suffering condition.

'Yes, dearie, I am sure that you are sorry; but I want you not to fret, little one' (for Pansy was mopping up big tears with her little pocket handkerchief). 'I wish, though, that you could think of some little hymn or text to repeat to me; the time is long lying here,' Lady Vant said, closing her eyes wearily.

Pansy thought very hard for a minute, for it was difficult for her to remember anything in such a hurry, when suddenly there flashed into her mind that Psalm which Grandmamma Forbisher had made her learn last Sunday. She could not

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remember it all, for truth to tell she was rather a lazy little girl, and things that she learned made only a slight impression on her; so in a low, steady voice she went through what she did know—

> '"My soul He doth restore again,
> And me to walk doth make
> Within the paths of righteousness,
> Ev'n for His own name's sake.
>
> Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
> Yet will I fear none ill:
> For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
> And staff me comfort still."'

That is all I can remember, please, grannie,' Pansy said in rather a dubious tone.

'It is very good, dearie; say it over again, Lady Vant said; and Pansy went through her task once more, and with even greater care and reverence than the first time.

But Lady Vant took no notice when she had finished, only still lay with closed eyes, her lips moving slightly, as if she were repeating Pansy's Psalm to herself.

Polkingham stood watching her for a minute, and then, holding out her hand to the little girl, drew her from the bedside.

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'I think my lady is tired now, Miss Pansy; do you go down to Mrs. Brown's room now, and she will give you some tea,' Polkingham said; and Pansy ran away, hoping that she had not worried grannie, and made her more ill.

The carriage was ordered earlier than usual that evening, and Sarah held up her hands in great amazement at seeing Pansy home so early.

'Grannie was very ill, and Grandpapa Vant couldn't be bothered with me this evening,' she announced, with cheerful candour, marching into the sitting-room and curling herself down on the hearthrug at Grandpapa Forbisher's feet.

'Poor Lady Vant! Did you see her, princess? or was she too ill even for that?' Daniel Forbisher asked, as he stroked Pansy's hair with his tremulous old fingers.

'No, she was not too ill to see me, though I think she is very bad, because she shut her eyes nearly all the time, and she didn't say "Thank you" when I said my bit of Psalm twice over, because she asked me to,' Pansy replied, condoning what she looked upon as a breach of politeness in consideration of Lady Vant's suffering condition.

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'Couldn't you remember the whole of that short Psalm, Pansy?' asked Grandmamma Forbisher, not a little shocked at the shortness of Pansy's memory.

'No, grandmamma; somehow I can't remember such things, and yet I never forget things out of Nature that Grandpapa Forbisher teaches me. Couldn't I learn Psalms and things that way, grandpapa?'

Grandpapa Forbisher laughed a little, and then he said, 'There are some things that you can't have done for you, little woman, and getting the Bible into your heart and your head is one of them. But this much I can tell you, that if once you take the sayings of that Book into your heart, you will never have any trouble to get them into your head, nor yet to retain them there either.'

'How shall I get them into my heart, Grandpapa Forbisher?' Pansy asked uneasily, apprehensive lest the process might be a painful one.

Daniel Forbisher did not speak for a minute, but sat looking into the fire, and nothing broke the silence of the room saving the click of Mrs.

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Forbisher's knitting-needles and the sleepy purring of the cat.

Then he asked her a question. 'Do you remember anything that your mother said in that last letter of hers, or that one from your father a fortnight ago?'

'Why, yes, of course, grandpapa; I can repeat them both from beginning to end. Grandmamma or Sarah read them over to me a few times, and then, every night when I go to bed, I say them over to myself, and it's almost like having a fresh letter—almost, but not quite, you know.'

'Yes, Pansy; and so it will be when you give your heart to God, and love Him as you love your father and mother now. His word—the Bible — will be to you just what your Indian letters are now, messages from your Father; every word will be so real and precious that you won't have to con them over like a book lesson, and then in a few hours forget all about them. You will remember what is in your heart, and what affects your daily life.'

But Pansy was puzzled still. 'Is that how Christians always feel, grandpapa?'

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'Yes, if they are real ones.'

'Then, why did grannie want me to say a hymn or a text, if she knew all about them in her heart?' she inquired, arguing from the supposition that Lady Vant was what Grandpapa Forbisher called a real Christian.

'My dear, you are too young to understand all about that; there are a number of things beyond your capacity to fathom, little Pansy, and that is one of them,' Grandpapa Forbisher replied. He never gave evasive answers when her questions became beyond the limits of desirable replies, but told her frankly that she must be content to have them remain unsolved.

'It will be nice when I'm big enough to understand everything,' sighed Pansy; 'and Sarah says that I grow like a weed, and I shall be eight years old in February, so it won't be long before I'm grown-up now.'

'Keep young as long as you can, little one,' said grandpapa.

'And learn a Psalm for next Wednesday, to repeat when you go to the Priory,' said grandmamma.

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'Yes, and I will begin directly after breakfast to-morrow morning, and I'll get it into my heart first, and then perhaps it will stay in my head,' Pansy replied.

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CHAPTER XIX

PANSY'S MINISTRY

'A little child that dimly understands,
And groping blindly, trusts for all the way.'

PANSY made haste to get her breakfast done the next day, in order that she might get to work on a Psalm for next week, because she meant to be well prepared for any emergency.

So, after breakfast had been all cleared away, and Grandmamma Forbisher was busy in the kitchen, planning out the day's work for Sarah and 'Liza, Pansy carried the Bible to her favourite corner in the kitchen window seat and commenced her task.

Grandpapa Forbisher had found her a Psalm, and read it over to her, so that she might make no

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blunders over the hard words; and for a whole half-hour Pansy was so intent on her labour of love that she neither moved nor spoke, except to whisper the words of her self-imposed lesson over and over, in order that she might get them firmly fixed in her mind.

At the end of the half-hour there came a rumble of wheels in the lane outside, which stopped before the house.

Mrs. Forbisher stopped short in her work to listen, and Pansy exclaimed, 'I believe that is the Priory carriage; shall I go and see, grandmamma?'

Just then 'Liza came in with a letter from Sir Hugh Vant to Mrs. Forbisher, saying that Lady Vant was not so well, and wished very much to see Pansy.

'There now, and I haven't got that Psalm into my head; oh dear, what a pity!' cried the little girl, as Sarah hurried her into her best frock, in order that she might not keep the horses standing.

'Never mind, dear; you have done your best, and God will do the rest,' Grandmamma Forbisher said. She too was assisting at Pansy's toilet, and

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the united efforts of her and Sarah soon resulted in a satisfactory finish.

'I wonder what that means?' Pansy asked herself, as she leant back on the cushions of the carriage. 'I wonder what it means that God will do the rest? How glad I shall be when I'm grown-up and know everything!'

Lady Vant's room was darkened, though the November day was dark too, and there was a strong odour of medicine in the room, when Pansy followed Sir Hugh to her grannie's bedside.

She didn't at all know what to say as she stood there looking at the weary, shrunken face on the pillow, and her eyes filled with tears, while she had much ado to keep her lips from quivering into sobs.

Grannie opened her eyes after a minute, and there came a little glad smile on her face, and she stretched out her hand to the child.

'Pansy!'

'Yes, grannie, but I didn't have time to learn much; you see, breakfast was late,' Pansy said, thinking that Lady Vant was asking for the result of her morning's study.

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The invalid's eyes turned inquiringly to her husband.

'What do you mean, Pansy? he asked.

'I was learning some texts for grannie, and I didn't get time to finish,' Pansy said in explanation.

'Suppose you say what you do know,' suggested Sir Hugh, in response to the asking look in Lady Vant's eyes.

'"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,"' began Pansy with great fluency, then came to a full stop, and thought for a minute; but think hard as she would the hiatus refused to be filled, and with a sigh she went on: '"God shall help her, and that right early."'

But the questioning, asking look had not left Lady Vant's face, and Sir Hugh asked her if she could say what it was that she wanted.

'Yesterday, the other Psalm,' the poor lady said brokenly, as though each word were a task too huge for her failing strength.

'I know!' Pansy exclaimed joyfully. 'It's the other one, the one in metre, that grannie wants;' and folding her hands she began the twenty-third

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Psalm, repeating what her childish instinct told her the poor, sinking sufferer most needed—

> '"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
> Yet will I fear none ill."'

'Grannie is sleeping now, little one; if she wakes and wants that verse again, repeat it to her, my pet. It is easy to see what your ministry is doing for her,' Sir Hugh said, and then he hastily left the room.

A trained nurse was helping Polkingham to-day —a sweet-faced lady, who moved with such quiet grace that it was restful just merely to look at her. From time to time she lifted Lady Vant's head from the pillow and gave her something in a teaspoon.

Once Pansy had to repeat her verse to her grannie, who afterwards appeared to sink into a deeper slumber. Then the room and the house being so very quiet, Pansy grew very drowsy, and her head kept dropping forward, until it rested against the pillows of the bed, when she went fast asleep as a top, and knew nothing more until she woke to find herself on the couch in the housekeeper's room, and to hear several people

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talking all at once, or so it seemed to her confused understanding.

'Poor lady, how very sudden it seemed!' one voice said.

'And to think how she longed for that dear child to come and repeat her bits of texts,' said another voice.

'Ay, ay, Mr. and Mrs. Forbisher did real Christian work when they put Scripture into that child's mouth,' a third voice put in; and then Pansy, still struggling with sleep, sat up and said—

'Why, how did I come here? I thought that I was in grannie's room. How is grannie now?'

'Grannie is better now; she will never be ill again,' Mrs. Brown said. She was sitting in a chair by the fire, and her eyes were red, as though from crying.

'Is she cured?' Pansy asked in great astonishment.

'No, dearie; grannie has gone to heaven,' Polkingham said, beginning to cry; and then Mrs. Brown cried too, while Pansy's tears fell in

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sympathy, and the old butler coughed a great deal, and kept blowing his nose, as though he would like to have joined them also.

'I wish that someone had told me that grannie was going to heaven straight away, then I could have asked her to tell God that I mean to be a real Christian, and get the Bible into my heart when I grow up,' Pansy said, when she had cried her handkerchief wet, and was compelled to cease shedding tears because she had nothing dry with which to wipe her eyes.

When the carriage came round to take Pansy back to the old house by the water, Sir Hugh came out from the library to bid her good-bye.

'Thank you, little one, for all that you have done,' he said; and Pansy could see that he was crying too.

'But I haven't done anything, and I didn't even know that grannie was going to heaven then,' expostulated Pansy.

But Sir Hugh kissed her, and went away without another word.

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CHAPTER XX

THE WHOLE FAMILY

'That men should brothers be,
And form one family
The wide world o'er.'

THE long dark winter slowly passed away, very slowly it seemed to Pansy; for it was the last week in January before the green spikes of the snowdrops had poked their heads through the brown earth in the old garden by the river-side, and quite another week later before the crocuses followed their example.

But after that the time pushed on at a brisker pace. The days grew warmer and brighter week by week, the birds were busy in their hedgerow nurseries, and an expectant bustle ranged everywhere through Dame Nature's domains. Young, skipping, frolicsome lambs appeared in the meadows;

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and the peep-peep of newly-hatched chickens began to be heard from the gardens of the cottagers, for almost everyone in Bardley kept poultry in their back yards and gardens.

The Priory had been shut up and left in charge of the butler and housekeeper all the winter, for Sir Hugh had gone away directly the funeral of Lady Vant was over, and was not expected back until the end of May.

Pansy's letters from India had contained no allusion to the home-coming of her father and mother, and when she asked Grandmamma Forbisher the old lady only nodded and smiled and looked mysterious, so that Pansy was not much the wiser for all her questioning.

The fine spring weather brought her a large amount of outdoor occupation. Grandpapa Forbisher wanted her help in the garden, and she had her own little patch that must be planted and tended, and what with one thing and what with another, Pansy's days at this time were about as full as it was possible for them to be, and every night she went to bed so tired that she was asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow.

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In this way April slipped quickly away, and the May days followed after, until one day Mrs. Brown, the Priory housekeeper, came down to ask if Miss Pansy might come to the Priory for two days to help get the rooms ready for the home-coming of Sir Hugh, whose return was shortly expected.

'How nice it will seem to have Grandpapa Vant back again!' Pansy exclaimed, skipping gleefully up the grand staircase at the Priory.

'Indeed it will, Miss Pansy; it has been terribly lonesome with no one in the house all the winter,' Mrs. Brown answered.

'But why are you getting so many rooms ready, Mrs. Brown? Grandpapa Vant cannot sleep in four or five beds at once,' Pansy cried, opening her eyes in great astonishment at the magnitude of the housekeeper's preparations.

Mrs. Brown arranged and rearranged the fold of a curtain before she replied; then she said slowly, 'Sir Hugh is bringing company with him—a lady and a gentleman and a wee tiny baby, and a little later there is to be more company in the house; so you see we have a busy time before us.'

'A baby? Oh, how very nice that will be! I

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can have such nice games with it when I come up on Wednesdays. But do you expect Grandpapa Vant will want me to come just the same as I did when grannie was here?' Pansy asked, a sudden wonder whether she would still be welcomed at the Priory as of yore coming into her head.

'Why, yes; I should say that he would want you more than ever now,' the housekeeper said, still busying herself with those troublesome curtains, which would not hang just to her mind apparently.

There was one suite of rooms upstairs prepared for the expected guests which Pansy had never seen before—a large bedroom, with a dressing-room on one side of it, and on the other the dearest little room imaginable.

'Oh, what a lovely little room, Mrs. Brown. This is just where I should like to sleep if I lived here!' Pansy cried in an ecstatic burst of admiration, as she looked at the little brass bed with its hangings of rose-colour and white.

'Yes, it is pretty,' assented Mrs. Brown; and then she proposed an adjournment to the kitchens and larder, so that Pansy might see the good things that had been provided in that department.

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By the time she got back to the old house by the water that night, Pansy was fairly tired out with her day, and was sent to bed an hour earlier than usual, in order that she might be nicely rested before going to the Priory again to-morrow.

She was just a little disappointed at not receiving her usual Indian letter, but she was too sleepy to grieve about it long, and next morning when she awoke, everyone seemed in such a hurry and bustle that there was not even time to think of it.

Pansy went off early, under the escort of Sarah, and after a long morning of running about watching the various preparations still in active progress, and making the acquaintance of the many new servants who had suddenly appeared on the scene, she had dinner in the housekeeper's room, and went to sleep on the sofa there, in order to be bright and ready for welcoming home Sir Hugh, who was expected that evening.

When she awoke, she was carried off by one of the new servants to have her frock changed, and then taken down to the great drawing-room, to find that Grandpapa and Grandmamma Forbisher were there, though she hadn't expected them in the least,

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and Grandpapa Forbisher was dressed in such grand black clothes that she hardly knew him, and exclaimed openly over the expanse of snowy shirt front which had taken the place of the familiar black silk stock; while Grandmamma Forbisher's satin gown trailed ever so far behind her on the ground, and she had a lovely new cap on her head.

But Pansy had scarcely time to notice all these innovations of toilet before some one said that the carriage was coming, and then they all went out to the front entrance to welcome Sir Hugh.

Grandmamma Forbisher began to tremble and cry as the carriage swept round the drive, and Pansy was so taken up with wondering what was the matter with her that she didn't have time to notice the occupants of the carriage, until she heard a glad shout, 'There is my little daughter!' and the next moment she was clasped in her very own father's arms.

For a moment she was too surprised for anything—could not return that loving, longed-for father's kiss, or even see her dear, dear mother's face, while all around her there waged a brisk fire

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of emotional greetings. Then she grew better, and was transferred from father to mother, then back to father again, Sir Hugh snatching a hasty kiss from her whenever he could get the chance, until it seemed almost as though she would be overwhelmed.

Oh, those dear mother-arms! How sweet to feel their embrace again! And father's voice sounding in her ears, unsteady with the joy of meeting after the long, long separation.

There was yet another surprise, though, for Pansy, and which sent her nearly wild with delight.

'Pansy,' said Mrs. Vant, 'look and see what we have brought you for a present.'

And Pansy turning round, saw her old ayah, Moolah, holding the dearest tiny baby, its long robes hanging over her swarthy arms.

'A baby brother, little Pansy,' Captain Vant said; and then Moolah uncovered his tiny pink face and put him into Pansy's arms, who trembled so much with excitement that she nearly dropped him.

'Oh dear! what a wonderful day this has been!' she cried that night, when her mother tucked her up in that identical little brass bed, with its hangings

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of rose-colour and white, which she had so admired on the previous day.

'Yes, my darling; and you will have another pleasure next week, for Colonel and Mrs. Raynor with their children are coming on a visit, and they will bring Dr. Snell with them.'

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